

# Upper Mississippi River-Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem

## *Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Report Region 3*

*1,100 acres of wetlands, 200 acres of oak savanna and forest and five miles of stream and associated flood plain were restored, enhanced or protected within the ecosystem in Fiscal Year 1999.*

-USFWS Photo by Mary Stefanski



### Ecosystem Description

Contained entirely within Region 3, the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem encompasses the eastern two-thirds of Iowa, most of Illinois, the eastern third of Missouri, the southeastern corner of Minnesota, and all but the most northern tip of Wisconsin. The Upper Mississippi River and its tributaries provide the largest remaining contiguous area of fish and wildlife habitat in the central United States. The system covers 186,000 square miles and is characterized by six unique features: the Mississippi River and tributaries, stream and riparian woodland corridors, prairie wetlands, tallgrass prairie, oak and savanna forestlands, and the "Driftless Area."

The Mississippi River and its 15 tributaries in the ecosystem provide critical sources of water for fish and other aquatic life, including large-river fish such as the paddlefish and pallid sturgeon. Riparian corridors offer travel lanes, and winter, nesting, and roosting cover for migratory birds and listed species such as the bald eagle and Indiana bat. Prairie wetlands harbor species dependent on small seasonal wetlands; wildlife associated with native grasslands depend on the remnants — only one-tenth remains — of the once vast tallgrass prairie. Oak Savannas and forest land, which were once prominent in the upper Midwest, are now among the rarest of natural communities. Still, those

that remain support a high diversity of plants and animals. The Driftless Area, so-named because it escaped the effects of the last glacial drift, covers parts of Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Characterized by deeply cut valleys and dissected uplands, the Driftless Area supports a large variety of unusual plant species as well as the threatened monkshood and the endangered Iowa Pleistocene snail.

As one might expect, some of the major challenges facing fish and wildlife managers in the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem are associated with activities along the mainstem of the Mississippi River as well as its tributaries. Maintenance of the navigation channel, construction of flood control levees, and operation of the locks and dams that facilitate river traffic have combined to change the river basin's capacity to support fish and wildlife. Managers must deal with erosion and sedimentation problems that fill in important habitats in bottomlands and backwaters. Industrial and urban runoff, sewage effluent, and agricultural runoff generate point and non-point source pollution. Clearing of wooded riparian corridors and conversion of oak savanna, wetland, and prairie habitats to agricultural uses also pose challenges. The area is also a magnet for outdoor recreationists – millions of visitors fish, hunt, boat, birdwatch, and otherwise enjoy the region's natural resources each year.

Says Ecosystem Team Leader Rick Frietsche, "The construction of the locks and dams resulted in great habitats for fish and wildlife. The continued degradation of these habitats is also a result of the locks and dams. It's a natural aging process. Our challenge as resource managers is to look for opportunities to restore the productivity of these habitats through programs such as the Environmental Management Program

### **Upper Mississippi River-Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem Team**

The Upper Mississippi River/ Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem team includes more than a dozen field stations, with representatives from Refuges, Ecological Services, Fisheries, and Law Enforcement programs. Team members work in subgroups which focus on specific aspects of the ecosystem, such as the Mississippi River Levee subgroup. The team works regularly with a variety of partners, including the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; these partners sometimes participate in or attend team meetings.

The Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem Team has prioritized its challenges and developed a set of goals to address the needs of its six designated focus areas. Those goals include protecting and restoring trust species and their habitats; restoration of the natural processes of the ecosystem — including hydrologic functions of the rivers and sediment transport – to



*The round goby, a native of the Caspian and Black seas, has spread to four of the Great Lakes, and concerns persist that it will invade the Upper Mississippi River system from Lake Michigan via the Illinois Waterway.*

-Photo by Center for Great lakes and Aquatic Sciences

maintain species and habitat diversity; promoting awareness of the ecosystem among the region's populace, emphasizing the options for sustainable land use management; identifying water quality problems that affect biodiversity within the ecosystem; and finding ways to reduce potential conflicts among the many users of the ecosystem's fish, wildlife, and plant resources.

In support of those goals, the team has an impressive list of accomplishments. Some recent highlights include:

A paddlefish coded wire tag center has been established through the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) at the Carterville Fishery Resources Office in southern Illinois. The Service, in coordination with the U.S. Geological Survey/Biological Resources Division, will be the central repository for data collected on tagged paddlefish, a species experiencing declines in some river systems. The data will facilitate a long-term study to assess, monitor and evaluate the status of paddlefish.

Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin was the first national hatchery to house native mussels from the wild. A three-year study that began in 1995 is aimed at gauging growth and survival among several mussel species kept at the hatchery. Researchers hope to learn about effects of moving mussels from the wild to artificial habitat, and whether rivers or ponds provide the best environment for growth and survival.

The battle against non-native, nuisance species continued with the ongoing effort to control the spread of the round goby. This species of fish, native to the Caspian and Black seas, has spread to four of the Great Lakes, and concerns persist that it will invade the Upper Mississippi River system from Lake Michigan via the Illinois Waterway. Surveys lead by the La Crosse Fishery Resources Office are conducted annually and an electronic barrier, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will soon be in place to curb further dispersal.

The Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently dedicated a \$12.5 million habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project at the Catechu National Wildlife Refuge along the Illinois River. The project, carried out under the Corps' Environmental Management Program for the Upper Mississippi River, brings needed water management capabilities to the refuge's Lake Catechu. Lake Catechu is the Illinois River Corridor's most important stopover for migrating water birds; the new water control structures allow managers to provide reliable habitat and food sources to thousands of migratory birds that pass through the area each fall.

## Summary of Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

The July 1999 meeting for team members and invited guests of the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem was held in Dubuque, Iowa. Team members received information from the Geographic Assistant Regional Director and staff regarding team expectations and the roles and responsibilities of various Regional Office personnel. Team members discussed resource priorities and identified team-driven accomplishments for future highlight. Updates on the Illinois River and Upper Mississippi River Focus Areas were presented along with representatives from other agencies who have resource interests within the ecosystem. Various subgroups had the opportunity to hold separate sessions to address specific resource issues and opportunities. In addition to the above scheduled team meeting, two team building sessions were taught by staff at the National Conservation Training Center and were completed by team members during the fiscal year.

A team charter was developed in Fiscal Year 1999 and ratified at the summer team meeting. This important document lays a foundation for cooperation among team members to accomplish landscape level resource improvements. Roles and responsibilities of the team, team members, executive committee, issue subgroups, and Geographic Area staff are included in the team charter.

Specific goals were developed by ecosystem team members as identified in the 1999 annual work plan for the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem. Team goals directly relate to previously described objectives as defined in the action plan for the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie ecosystem. Based on preliminary estimates, 700 acres of native prairie, 1,100 acres of wetlands, 200 acres of Oak Savanna and forest and five miles of stream and associated flood plain were restored, enhanced or protected within the ecosystem in Fiscal Year 1999. These important habitat accomplishments occur on both private and public lands and have positive watershed benefits, some of which contribute to lands managed by the National Wildlife Refuge System. In addition, habitat projects directly address the Service's trust responsibilities for migratory birds and imperiled species such as the Higgins eye pearly mussel, paddlefish, Earner blue butterfly and northern monkshood.

Additional team accomplishments for Fiscal Year 1999 include coordination efforts with the state DNR's, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey and other partners on two pool-wide water level management experiments, Habitat Needs Assessment, Navigation Study and Environmental Management Program studies on the Mississippi River. Through efforts of multiple refuge, fisheries and ecological services field stations, the Upper Mississippi/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem team had exten-



sive involvement in the design and collection of biological information on the Pool 8 water level management experiment, participated in the completion and dedication of Habitat Restoration Enhancement Projects and other assistance associated with the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study and Environmental Management Program.

Through opportunities such as the Clean Water Action Plan, Non-game Bird Program, Fish Habitat Restoration Program, and Challenge Cost Share Program a variety of on and off Service land projects received funding within the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem. These funds are typically directed to projects that address resource needs within the ecosystem. Examples include the Halfway Creek project in Wisconsin, the Cache River and Pope Creek Watersheds in Illinois, and prairie restoration throughout central Wisconsin for the endangered Eastern Blue Butterfly and proposed massasauga rattlesnake.

Rick Frietsche, refuge manager at Trempealeau NWR, served admirably as ecosystem team leader throughout Fiscal Year 1999. John Mabery, a biologist at Crab Orchard NWR, was elected to the position during the summer meeting and will take on the assignment in 2000.

*Biologists from the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR helped band white pelicans in Minnesota as part of a three-years study of the fish-eating birds.*

-USFWS Photo by Eric Nelson



## Goals for Fiscal Year 2000

The following activities have been established for team members of the Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem for Fiscal Year 2000:

### Lift Conservation of Migratory Birds to a Higher Level

Participate in the Navigation Pool 8 experimental water level reduction. Evaluate trust resource benefits of this Water Level Management Task Force directed activity.

Species listed in the Region 3 Resource Conservation Priorities Plan will receive special attention in planning for the restoration of 200 acres of forest, 700 acres of wetland and 1,000 acres of grassland throughout the ecosystem.

Assist Whooping Crane Recovery Team to complete preliminary release tasks.

### Strengthen the Ecosystem Approach to Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Restore and protect oak savannah and barrens habitat on lands owned by 15 landowners in Wisconsin to benefit the endangered eastern blue butterfly. Assist with implementation of goals in the Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for the eastern blue butterfly.

In cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state partners, develop and implement a plan to relocate the Higgins eye pearly mussel (*Lampsyllis higginsii*) to mitigate the deleterious effects of the zebra mussel.

Initiate discussion with federal, state and tribal partners for at least one watershed improvement project within the Illinois River (eg. Crow Creek, Ill) and Upper Mississippi Watershed (eg. Vernon County, Wis.) focus areas.

Form a subgroup to develop priorities for the Driftless Area.

The Division of Federal Aid, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources(DNR) and Upper Mississippi River/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem team, will participate in the development of Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plans for the DNR's Geographic Management Units.

### Lead Efforts to Prevent the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Species

Work cooperatively to conduct an assessment of the electric barrier scheduled to be placed in the Illinois River waterway as a deterrent to the downstream spread of the round goby.

Work cooperatively to maintain the insectary for purple loosestrife *Galerucella* beetles established in 1999. Continue to release and monitor adult beetles at selected sites.

Education and outreach will be used to increase public understanding of invasive species.

**Set the Course for  
the Future of the Refuge  
System**

Assist with implementation of recommendations identified in Fulfilling the Promises document, such as findings from the Mississippi River Levee Subgroup.

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## Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

### Refuge Hosts Eighth Annual Deer Hunt for Disabled Hunters

#### *Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge*

On Saturday Oct.10, 1998, the Trempealeau Sportsman's Club conducted its annual deer hunt for disabled hunters at Trempealeau NWR. Four hunters and their assistants were assigned to designated areas, and after having a natural hunting opportunity, drives were made through the woods by additional volunteers. Although no deer were taken, the hunters all enjoyed the opportunity to be on the refuge engaged in an activity that otherwise may not have been possible for them. Partners include: Trempealeau Sportsman's Club 10/10/98

### Winona Dist./Trempealeau NWR Team Up for Habitat

#### *Upper Mississippi National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-Winona District*

Refuge employees Steve Erickson and Dan McDonah (Trempealeau NWR) have been on the road since early October helping landowners plant prairie grasses and wildflowers, mostly on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage. So far this fall, Steve and Dan have planted nearly 200 acres on farms in Buffalo, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties in Wisconsin, and Winona County in Minnesota. Seeding native grasses and wildflowers requires specialized equipment which is gener-

ally not accessible to landowners in this area. Here's where the Fish and Wildlife Service comes in. Using a Truax No-Till drill stored at Winona District and a second drill owned by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Steve and Dan haul the tractor and drill to area farms. Seeding is done at no charge, however, the landowner provides the seed and is responsible for the site preparation. These stands of undisturbed grassland provide important habitat for many species of birds, both in spring for nesting and as winter cover. Although Service policy has dictated that this activity be discontinued on CRP lands as of Sign-up 18, the Winona District is continuing to honor commitments made prior to receiving that change in direction. Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Winona County Soil and Water Conservation District, Pheasants Forever, Alma Rod & Gun Club, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 11/1/98

### Refuge to Receive Major Land Addition

Upper Mississippi National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-Winona District

As a condition of the Wabasha Prairie disposal site project, contractor L.W. Matteson is in the process of transferring ownership of approximately 120 acres of wetland property to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The property includes two separate tracts located adjacent to the Winona District boundary in Wabasha County, Minnesota. The property was acquired by the contractor

from Henry Barton at a price of \$120,000. It will be donated to the Service for future management as part of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The tract is located in the Zumbro River bottoms and contains some of the last remaining wetlands on private lands in the area. Partners include: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, L.W. Matteson Inc., of Burlington, Iowa. 11/1/98

### Wabasha Prairie Sand Disposal Project Complete

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-Winona District

Contractor, LW Matteson, operating under a Special Use Permit from the Winona District has just completed a project in the Kellogg, Minn. area which included placement of 500,000 cubic yards of sand onto 29 acres of Refuge uplands. The sand is being pumped from a storage site within the Mississippi River floodplain to Refuge lands nearly five miles away. The disposal site was contoured, covered with a four to six-inch layer of topsoil and stabilized with mulch and a cover crop seeding to minimize erosion. Removal of this large quantity of sand from the floodplain will greatly reduce the likelihood that channel dredging will further impact Refuge wetlands. The site will be planted to native grasses and wildflowers in 1999, and with management, should provide excellent habitat for prairie wildlife species. Topsoil used to cover the sand disposal area was taken from shallow scrapes on state and federal lands nearby.



As a result, eight small wetlands totaling almost five surface acres were created. Finally, as a condition of the permit to place sand on Refuge lands, the contractor purchased two parcels of wetlands totaling about 120 acres to be donated to the Refuge. Partners include: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources, Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges. 11/1/98

**Cypress Creek NWR Partners with Illinois EcoWatch**  
*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Cypress Creek NWR has been working with the Illinois EcoWatch since 1995 through the RiverWatch monitoring Program. The partnership helps protect and restore native habitat; protect and improve the condition and functional integrity of the Cache River Ecosystem; and encourage participation by volunteer citizens and scientists in monitoring the health of the Cache River its associated wetlands and forests. The partners publicize EcoWatch events on the Worldwide Web (<http://dnr.state.il.us/ecowatch/partner>); involves volunteers in monitoring along the Cache; and share long-term monitoring data. Output: The Refuge and Joint Venture Partners have become Partners with the Illinois EcoWatch Network. The Refuge has been working with EcoWatch since 1995 and has 20 volunteers dedicated to collecting resource data for this long-term monitoring project. 11/2/98

**Scouts Help Rehabilitate Hiking Trail**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

A local boy scout troop worked three days to attain an Eagle Merit badge for member Gene Nawrot. Gene organized the volunteers and directed the work effort in first laying down a weed barrier and then spreading about three inches of gravel on the trail. Work was accomplished with help from refuge staff operating equipment. A total of 3,300 feet of barrier cloth and 66 yards of gravel were used to accomplish the task. The trail was much in need of rehabilitation as it was barely visible to users. The rehabilitation will also be more user-friendly to physically challenged visitors. 11/7/98

**Volunteer Records Reached at Horicon NWR Staff Visitor Center**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Seventeen volunteers recorded 416 hours of donated work to the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge visitors center from August to November 1998. Both the number of volunteers and the donated hours (seven days per week) are record numbers for the Refuge. The volunteers served 11,700 visitors and generated net sales of \$10,000 for the Midwest Interpretive Association. Partners in the project include: Volunteers of Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, Midwest Interpretive Association, Fond du Lac Audubon Club. 11/12/98

**Prairie Grass Restoration at Meredosia NWR**

*Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge*

The mild fall allowed refuge staff to plant 20 acres in prairie grasses at Meredosia NWR. Grasses planted included big bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, and little bluestem. 11/15/98

**Refuge Initiates Southern Illinois University Involvement w/ Reforestation**

*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Staff from Cypress Creek NWR and the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture met with School of Forestry staff at Southern Illinois University (SIU). In the past, SIU has shown little interest in the Cache River Wetlands and ongoing restoration work. However, five new forestry professors have demonstrated their enthusiasm to become involved with the Refuge and the reforestation effort. The meeting resulted in determining research topics/possible projects and the commitment to initiate a monitoring Program of bottomland hardwood restoration. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy 11/18/98

**Friends Receive Funds for Hogue Woods Environmental Education Site**

*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Located in the north central portion of the Refuge, this project highlights Hogue Woods, a 200 acre tract of

contiguous forest. A grant from the Illinois DNR will provide the resources to develop the site as an outdoor classroom for group Programming. The site has received national recognition for its songbird populations and is a popular wildlife watching spot. Public facilities will provide access to a mature growth forest, reforested uplands, riparian and wetland habitat. The site will offer schools and visitors an interdisciplinary range of educational experiences and recreational opportunities. Partners include: Friends of the Cache River Watershed, Union County Highway Department, Illinois DNR 11/18/98

### **Eight Indicted in Poaching Ring**

*St. Paul Law Enforcement*  
Service Special Agents and Minnesota Conservation Officers began an investigation into the illegal take of moose and bear in northern Minnesota. Later, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Officers assisted. On November 18, 1998 a federal Grand jury in Minneapolis, Minn. returned an indictment charging seven men and one woman with Conspiracy and Lacey Act charges. The indictment alleges Wyoming and Wisconsin residents hunted and took illegal bears and moose in northern Minnesota during 1995-1997 and illegally transported the wildlife in interstate commerce. Suspects used Wyoming and Minnesota resident hunting licenses and tags to cover the illegal wildlife. Partners include: Wisconsin DNR Con-

servation Officers, Minnesota DNR Conservation Officers 11/19/98

### **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Improves Parking Areas and Roads**

*Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge*  
Southern Illinois Asphalt Company completed asphalt surfacing on the three areas of Crab Orchard NWR November 24, 1998. The West End Boat Ramp Parking Lot, Little Grassy Campground Entrance Road and Little Grassy Dam Overlook received new surfaces. Work at the West End Boat Ramp Parking Lot included asphaltting the roadway and parking lot area. The area that was covered was approximately 77,000 square feet and will provide enough parking spaces to accommodate 75 vehicles and boat trailers. The cost for this area was \$50,921.00. Little Grassy Campground Entrance Roadway was asphalted beginning at the County Highway and running through the campground for total distance of 4,450 linear feet or 89,000 square feet and one parking lot 4,095 square feet. Cost to do this area was \$48,467. Little Grassy Dam Road Overlook had an area asphalted approximately 8,900 square feet. Cost to do this area was \$7,737. All areas had a base course of two-inch lift and surface course of 1 inch lift applied. Funds to do these three areas came from the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. Work began on November 16, 1998. The improvements made to finish the Westend Parking Lot will provide the visiting public

with safer place to park their vehicles and boat trailers. Accessible parking areas have been designated, new lighting has been installed, and easier access on and off the county road. Improvements made to the Little Grassy Campground road and Little Grassy Dam Overlook will provide a safer access to these two locations. 11/24/98

### **Pike County Men Charged for Poaching Deer in National Wildlife Refuge**

*Springfield Law Enforcement*  
On Nov. 30, 1998, Special Agent Timothy Santel and the U.S. Attorney, Springfield, Ill. filed charges on Frank and Joseph Daniels of Pittsfield, Ill., for violations of the Lacey Act. The six-count Information charged the men for killing a trophy white-tail deer on the DeLair Unit of Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge in Pike County, Ill. The men were apprehended in a joint investigation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Special Operations Unit in which a undercover officer posed as a taxidermist and ran a covert business in Pittsfield, Ill. for 30 months. Nearly 30 subjects were apprehended during the investigation. In addition to the Daniels charges, seven other men were charged in Federal court for violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Approximately 35 notice of violations were issued to the subjects for nearly \$8,000 in fines. A Dec. 16 arraignment is scheduled in U.S. District Court, Springfield, Ill., for the men. 11/30/98

### **Rice Lake EMP Project Completed**

#### *Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge*

The Rice Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project was completed through the Environmental Management Program. Water control capability was established on two wetlands totaling 320 acres. Construction items included two earthen berms with repair of a river-related breach in the Continental Grain Marsh natural levee; construction of a water control structure; and excavation of an intra-lake channel to maximize drawdowns. In addition, 45 acres of floodplain forest was reestablished by tree plantings in a former agricultural field adjacent to the wetlands. Water management capabilities will allow reestablishment of native aquatic vegetation, improve water quality, and habitat for wetland-dependent species. 12/1/98

### **Barrens Program Given to SAF Student Chapter**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Twenty members of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters attended a presentation about oak and pine barrens restoration at Necedah NWR by Park Ranger Power. Power discussed the definition of barrens and gave an overview of the issues and techniques surrounding barrens restoration at the refuge. Three students expressed interest in becoming refuge volunteers. UW-Stevens Point 12/3/98

### **Laboratory Tour for University Students**

#### *LaCrosse Fish Health Center*

On December 4, 1998, La Crosse Fish Health Center staff provided a tour of laboratory facilities and demonstrations on diagnostic techniques (e.g., Polymerase Chain Reaction, ELISA, Fluorescent Antibody Techniques, Tissue Cell Culture, etc.) to 15 University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Microbiology students. 12/4/98

### **Czech Forester Tours Necedah NWR**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Czech Republic forester, Lubomir Salek, was given an orientation and tour of the Necedah NWR by Refuge Manager Wargowsky and Biologist King on Dec. 7, 1998. Mr. Salek was accompanied by three other Wisconsin foresters. The Necedah NWR oak savanna restoration program was highlighted during the tour. Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 12/7/98

### **Illinois Hunters Pleads Guilty in Federal Court**

#### *Springfield Law Enforcement*

On Dec. 9, 1998, Ronald N. Smith, St. Charles, Ill., plead guilty before the U.S. Magistrate Judge, East Saint Louis, Ill., for violations of the Lacey Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Smith plead guilty to the five count Information as a result of charges revealed during a undercover investigation by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources into illegal waterfowl hunting in Jersey County, Ill. Smith was charged for transporting

overlimits of waterfowl, killing overlimits of waterfowl, giving untagged waterfowl, shooting migratory birds with an unplugged shotgun and using lead to shoot migratory birds.

Smith was sentenced to three years probation at which time Smith cannot hunt anywhere in the U.S. In addition, Smith forfeited two shotguns seized by wildlife officers, and was fined \$3,000 in which \$600 is earmarked for the Lacey Act Reward Account, \$1,200 for the Illinois Jake Wolf Fund and \$1,200 in fine. In addition, Smith has to pay \$65 in court costs. The case was prosecuted by Special Agent Timothy Santel and the U.S. Attorney's office for the Southern District of Illinois. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources-Enforcement 12/9/98

### **Bat Cave Opened at McGregor District Office**

#### *Upper Mississippi National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-McGregor District*

A cave opening at the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR, McGregor District Office, was recently opened after being blocked off for many years. The cave openings, at the District's Visitor Contact Station, were originally used for beer and ice storage by a brewery located on the site in the 1860's. Historically the caves were host to hundreds of bats and were locally known as the bat caves. The caves were later bricked over for safety reasons. One cave was re-opened and custom fitted with a gate to allow bats in for

hibernation, but to keep children out. One Eastern pipistrel is using the cave this winter. An interpretive sign was developed educating the public on the value of bats.

12/10/98

### **First Horicon Marsh Internship a Success**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Full-time fall intern Katie Bares worked with several partners; helped staff the refuge Visitor Center, field trips and special events; led all of the fall Goose Talks; partially developed a field trip guide for educators; and gained valuable classroom experience. She helped develop a "Wild Things" traveling wildlife trunk for Horicon NWR. The refuge provided training, supervision, workspace/computer, and overall coordination, while Marsh Haven provided housing, Midwest Interpretive Association provided \$1,000 stipend, and Designs by Vine provided a computer and work space. Partner include: The Midwest Interpretive Association, Marsh Haven Nature Center, Washington Elementary School, Vine's Designs, and Horicon NWR. 12/11/98

### **PCR Training for Minnesota Biologists**

*LaCrosse Fish Health Center*  
Audrey Dikkeboom and Becky Lasee, La Crosse Fish Health Center, Onalaska Wis., provided training (December 14-15, 1998) in Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) techniques to three Minnesota Department of Natural Resources biologists. All three biologists were provided

hands-on training in using PCR to identify *Renibacterium salmoninarum*, the causative agent of Bacterial Kidney Disease (BKD). 12/14/98

### **Necedah Cleans Up With Small Lot Sale**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Approximately 300 items of excess and unserviceable property were identified from house cleaning efforts during CY 1998. They were brought to a storage building and adjacent shed and arranged into 77 similar lots with minor assistance by the Wisconsin Conservation Corps crew. On Dec. 7, an announcement of the sale was sent to seven area newspapers. Prospective bidders were allowed to view the items and submit closed bids for each lot from Dec. 14 - 16. At noon on Dec. 16, the viewing and bidding was closed and submitted bids were opened and the successful bidder identified. Each was then notified and requested to pay for and pick up the excess property by Dec. 18, 1999.

12/16/98

### **Lake Catechu HREP Completed**

#### *Catechu National Wildlife Refuge*

The Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project (HREP) is complete on lake Catechu. The project included construction of a 41,000 gallon per minute pump station, a three bay water control structure in the north pool, a two bay water control structure in the south pool, a boat ramp and rehabilitation of two miles of levee and .5 miles of cross dike.

This contract was plagued in the early stages by poor contractor performance and flooding; and after three years of work and loss of a major water control structure, the refuge was worse off than before construction started. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made the commitment to the Service that they would fix the problems and finish the project to give us a functional system to serve our needs.

12/17/98

### **Refuge Force Account Team Work on Lake Catechu**

#### *Catechu National Wildlife Refuge*

The refuge force account team, with support from other refuges and volunteers, completed construction of two spillways with gabion baskets (each 750 feet) and construction of 1.2 miles of setback levee 1/4 mile from the Illinois River and rebuilt 3.8 miles of levee. Completion of these projects will provide full water management capabilities for managing the pool for waterfowl, shorebirds, fish and other wildlife.

12/17/98

### **Refuge Volunteers Recognized**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR held its annual volunteer appreciation night on Dec. 18, 1998. Staff members, volunteers, and their relatives enjoyed a buffet dinner followed by the ceremony. Each refuge volunteer was given a 1999 National Wildlife Refuge calendar. In addition, 500-hour and 100-hour pins were given to two exceptional volunteers. Bryce Berklund was honored



as Necedah's 1998 Refuge Volunteer of the Year. Total attendance was 45. 12/18/98

### **Necedah Volunteer Reaches 500 hours!**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Dec. 18, 1998, Ruth Kies was given an award acknowledging her volunteer efforts at the Necedah NWR. She joined the "500 hour club" with her time donation towards the accomplishment of refuge goals. Her volunteer time was divided into biology and public use, helping with research and assisting with public use programs. Ruth is also currently the treasurer of the Friends of Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. 12/18/98

### **1998 Refuge Volunteer of the Year Selected**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Dec. 18, 1998, Bryce Berklund was honored acknowledging his volunteer efforts at the Necedah NWR as the 1998 Refuge Volunteer of the Year. Bryce has shown dedication, enthusiasm, and unfaltering support towards refuge and Service goals. He assisted with projects in maintenance, biology, forestry, fire, education, and administration. Bryce is also serving currently as vice president of the Friends of Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. 12/18/98

### **Tundra Swan Research on the Upper Mississippi Refuge**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

University of Minnesota graduate student, Erik Thorson has radio-collared 20 tundra swans staging on the Mississippi River this fall. The 20 birds were captured by night-lighting at eight sites between Wabasha, Minn. and McGregor, Iowa. Mr. Thorson intends to answer management questions about day and night time use of the River by the swans. The birds have shown wide movement patterns, as determined from aerial and ground tracking. The high percentage of cygnets found within the population means this region of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is very important for migrating family groups. Partners include: University of Minnesota, U.S. Geological Survey 12/22/98

### **Dead Adult Bald Eagle Found**

#### *Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge-Wapello District*

A dead adult bald eagle was discovered by Iowa Department of Natural Resources Biologist Bill Ohde and Wapello Resident Ron Cross. Cause of death appears suspicious, so the eagle will be sent to the National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Ore. for necropsy. 12/22/98

### **Wildlife Observation Decks Open to the Public**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

A project which began in 1994

to construct an observation deck on Lower Pool 8 (Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge - La Crosse District) has finally been completed. The project was delayed due to the lack of funds, lack of interested contractors, and unsatisfactory contractors. However, on the third request for quotations, a contractor was found. In the end, two decks were built by Voss & Sons, Inc., for \$55,000. The District annually receives over 1.3 million visitors. These are the only observation decks currently located on the District and should receive a tremendous amount of use, the extent of use is unknown at this time. Partners include: Minnesota Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, La Crosse County Park Department, I & M Railroad, Tri-County Electric, and Southern Bluffs Elementary. 12/23/98

### **Busy First Quarter for Partners Program**

#### *Leopold Wetland Management District*

The first quarter of Fiscal Year 1999 was busy for the District's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Leopold District staff restored 45 wetland basins covering 142.7 acres on private lands during the three month period. Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Various County Land and Water Conservation Districts 1/1/99



### **Annual Eagle Watch a Success**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

The Second Annual Upper Mississippi River Eagle Watch was held on Saturday, January 9 at the Dresbach Information Area (Minnesota Department of Transportation). The Information Area provides an excellent heated view of open water on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Approximately 80 people came to the event to view bald eagles on the river. Three mounted eagles were on display inside the Information Area. Refuge volunteers assisted with the event and answered questions about the eagles. Partners include: Upper Mississippi River NW&FR, Coulee Audubon Society, Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges, Upper Mississippi River Interpretive Association, Minnesota Dept. of Transportation 1/9/99

### **Necedah NWR Hosts First Cross Country Ski Workshop**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Saturday, Jan. 16, 1999, 37 people attended an Introduction to Cross Country Skiing Workshop at Necedah NWR. Using skis provided by the Friends of Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, the students from age three to 65 were instructed on the basics of the popular winter sport by Refuge employee Clerk Rabuck with assistance of the Friends and Refuge employee Arciszewski. Topics included selecting skis, dressing for the weather, putting on equipment, moving

on skis, falling and getting back on your feet and techniques for moving forward. After the familiarization, the group was lead on the Pair Ponds trail to practice these skills. Leaders and members of a 4-H club were also in the group. The Friends group provided refreshments following the trail navigation. 1/16/99

### **Midwinter Bald Eagle Count**

#### *Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge - Brussels Dist*

Mark Twain NWR - Brussels District participated in the Illinois State Bald Eagle count on Jan. 16, 1999. Seven teams of 23 people covered over 100 miles from Hartford to Hamburg (Mississippi River Road) and from Grafton to Pearl (Illinois River Road). A total of 621 eagles were spotted, including 137 eagle observed at the three divisions of Mark Twain NWR - Brussels District. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Audubon Society 1/16/99

### **Horicon NWR Celebrates Volunteer Achievements**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

In 1998, 200 people volunteered 5,624 hours at Horicon NWR which has an estimated value of \$70,300. Steve Eastery was named Volunteer of the Year. Amanda Schrank was named the individual who worked the most hours, and the Beaver Dam Charter School was named the group with most hours. About 50 people attended the annual volunteer recognition event held on January 18. Four newspapers papers covered

the event. About 100 news releases were mailed afterwards. Partners: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Beaver Dam Charter School, Mayville Girl Scout Troop 1261, Lomira Area Jaycees, Tennesies Homeschool, Renewal Unlimited, the Bud Cook Family, the Tom Giese Family, Achievers 4-H Club, Lutheran Social Services, and many others! 1/18/99

### **Task Force Recommends Water Level Reduction in Mississippi's Pool 8**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

During the last year there have been many discussions about the reduction of water levels in Upper Mississippi River, Pool 8 (La Crosse) to mimic natural summer river conditions. The reduction would promote aquatic plant growth and dry sediments along the river's edge. A task force of state and federal fish and wildlife managers and scientists, recreational boaters, and commercial navigation interests have been assessing the feasibility of conducting a water level reduction during the summer of 2000. This idea has been discussed and reviewed extensively and it appears to be a viable tool for improving river habitat. One major component of the study is to determine what the maximum level of water reduction should be and how to manage the reduction based on the concerns that have been raised. Considering information gathered from public meetings, commercial and

recreational surveys, biological and weather information, the task force recommends using two control points to manage a water level reduction on Pool 8. First, the water level reduction will be minimized in the upper position of Pool 8 so water levels at the LaCrosse weather service stage gage would not fall below 4.2 plus or minus, two-tenths of a foot. The second control point for the determination would be Lock and Dam 8 (Genoa, Wis.) where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would manage for a maximum reduction of 18 inches. Taking both of these control points into account means the water levels would be reduced during summer months by a maximum of six inches at LaCrosse, Wis., and 18 inches at Lock and Dam 8. 1/19/99

### **Necedah NWR Staff Attends Wisconsin Wildlife Management Training**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR staff attended portions of the two-day Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources sponsored Wildlife Management Statewide Training Conference in Eau Claire. The theme for the conference was "Building Skills for the 21st Century." Topics included wetland regulation and biology, grasslands and savannas, forest management, new technology, and wildlife education. This proved to be a good opportunity to network with state natural resource professionals and strengthen partnerships. 1/20/99

### **Status Report on Spring Lake EMP, Pool 13**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

The proposed construction in the Upper Lake will accommodate a combination of moist soil and managed marsh operations. This will meet the project objective of providing reliable food resources in the Upper Lake for migratory birds. Habitat diversity for other marsh-dwelling species will be an additional output. The proposed gated inlet structure and excavated channels in the Lower Lake will provide capability to selectively introduce flow into the Lower Lake. Greater dispersion of dissolved oxygen also will be realized. This feature will substantially improve the water quality and aquatic habitat in the Lower Lake. Partners include: Rock Island District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1/20/99

### **Volunteers Honored at Annual Banquet**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

A joint volunteer recognition banquet was held with the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge - La Crosse, La Crosse Fishery Resources Office and La Crosse Fish Health Center to honor the efforts of over 200 volunteers. Nearly 70 volunteers attended the banquet which featured guest speaker Captain Ron Larson. Recognition awards were presented to individuals who volunteered more than 4,000 hours for the three offices. 1/22/99

### **Volunteers Help Restore Savanna**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Saturday, Jan. 23, 1999, 34 people braved horrible winter weather to turn out at Necedah NWR to recreate habitat for many disappearing species. The group watched a slide show on savanna habitat, its value to our state, and the restoration process in progress at Necedah. Then they headed outdoors for a safety orientation and equipment briefing. The volunteers then participated in burning slash piles to remove logging debris. The mission of the day was to reduce fuel loads for spring prescription burning, educate visitors, and enjoy being out on the refuge. The Friends of Necedah NWR, Inc., provided cocoa, hot dogs, and marshmallows for the group's lunch. Attendees included a cub scout troop and members of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Fire Crew. A total of 131 volunteer hours were donated during the event. The Refuge plans to repeat the activity in March, when the weather may be more cooperative. Partners included: Friends of Necedah, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Fire Crew, Cub Scouts, other volunteers 1/23/98

### **West Salem High School Class Participates in Wolf Tracking**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Jan. 26, 1999, 26 students and chaperones from the West

Salem High School participated in a wolf tracking experience on the Necedah NWR along with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Biologist Dick Thiel. Numerous tracks have been located on the refuge previously and they are attempting to gain further information with the help of volunteers. The group was also given a demonstration at the refuge headquarters on endangered and/or threatened species, including the massasauga rattlesnake by Refuge Biologist King. 1/26/99

### **Reduced Grazing Allows Habitat Improvements**

#### *Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge*

During the period 1990-1998 habitat improvements were made by converting 792 Refuge acres from pasture land to either forest habitat or enhanced grassland habitat. In addition, approximately 15 miles of livestock fence was removed by volunteers. Five hundred twenty-five acres of this low quality pasture land was converted to native grasses and legumes which provide desirable food and cover for migratory birds and indigenous wildlife. As part of an ongoing effort to reduce forest habitat fragmentation, another 267 acres were planted with native hardwood tree seedlings. Planting was accomplished by Refuge staff and volunteers, with seedlings contributed by Illinois Department of Conservation. Herbicide application and clover seed for site preparation, as well as additional tree seedlings, were purchased with funds contributed by several partners.

Partners include: Illinois Department of Conservation, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Wildlife Forever, Quail Unlimited Inc., Olin Corporation, Phoenix Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Shawnee Group, Friends of Crab Orchard 1/27/99

### **Necedah NWR Attends Wisconsin Inter-Agency Conference**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Central Wisconsin land managers met on Feb. 27, 1999 in Mauston for an annual session to share strategies for addressing local resource problems and opportunities. Twenty agencies from Adams and Juneau Counties were represented. Topics included new wind and watershed projects, county-wide development planning and cost-shared land stewardship programs for private landowners. 1/27/99

### **Necedah NWR Helps Scout Achieve Bear Badge**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Brandon Scarbrough, from Manhattan, Ill., met with Refuge Employee Clerk Rabuck and gathered information on the Necedah Refuge. Part of the requirements for the badge was to conduct an interview, gather materials and uncover the history of a chosen area. Brandon chose Necedah NWR because of his familiarity with it. The Scarbrough family own property in the area and they often take trips through the refuge to view wildlife. 1/30/99

### **Necedah NWR Holds Tracking Workshop**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Jan. 30, 1999, 13 people attended a winter wildlife tracking workshop. Taught by refuge volunteer Terry Gerrigan, the workshop provided an orientation to animal gaits, tracking patterns and habits. After an indoor discussion, the participants went out on the refuge to put their new skills to the test. Refuge wildlife cooperated and provided several excellent track samples. 1/30/99

### **Cost-share Program Thrives on Partnerships**

#### *Private Lands*

Habitat-oriented projects will restore approximately 600 acres of wetlands and nearly 2,800 acres of associated uplands, predominantly grasslands, on private and public lands. Twenty-eight projects will improve recreational fishing opportunities on national wildlife refuges. Many projects will provide public outreach, public recreation and new or enhanced accessibility features to accommodate physically challenged persons who visit the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service's Regional expenditure for 148 projects is \$545,000, or \$3,682 per project. Partners are contributing approximately \$2,100,000 of matching funds, or \$13,896 per project. The Partner to Service cost-share ratio is 79:21. 2/1/99

### **Necedah NWR Interviewed Regarding Whooping Crane Study**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Phil Cianciola from Milwaukee radio station, WTMJ, called Necedah NWR on Feb. 24, 1999, regarding a news release from state Senator Kevin Shibilsky which announced that Necedah NWR was chosen as a release site for the reintroduction of whooping cranes in Wisconsin. A short interview was conducted during which it was explained that a Whooping Crane Recovery Team was examining a number of sites in Wisconsin and elsewhere in the Midwest as possible release sites. Habitat was being examined for nesting and brood rearing as part of the Ecological Assessment that the Team was preparing. It was explained that Necedah NWR and other public lands in Central Wisconsin had played an important role in the recovery of the sandhill crane populations in Wisconsin, and that similar success would be anticipated with whooping cranes in the hopes of bringing this magnificent bird back to Wisconsin for future generations to enjoy.

Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, International Crane Foundation 2/4/99

### **Crab Orchard Replaces Aging Little Wolf Creek Bridge**

*Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge*

A new bridge to replace the aging Little Wolf Creek Bridge was constructed Dec. 7, 1998. The Perry County Construction Company also removed the

Little Wolf Creek Bridge; built in 1967. The new bridge consists of one 82-foot long x 22-foot wide laminated timber bridge with steel shell cast-in-place piling, concrete abutments and piers, deck construction, asphalt road reconstruction, and guard rails. The bridge now meets Service standards, and improves traffic flow for industrial tenants and the auto tour route for visiting public. 2/7/98

### **Status Report on Polander Lake EMP, Pool 5A**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

This summer the construction of the second phase of the Polander Lake Environmental Management Plan (WMP) project will begin to complete restoration in the backwater lake using man-made islands. The islands will break up wind and water energy, therefore, creating quiet areas that will start reproducing vegetation. Upper Mississippi River NWFR continues to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that the islands are constructed with maximum habitat benefits, cost efficiency, and minimal maintenance in mind. Partners include: St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 2/9/99

### **Horicon NWR Offers Wildlife Trunk to Educators**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Horicon NWR invites educators to borrow the new Wildlife Discovery Trunk. Contents include activity guides, books, compact discs, games, videos,

posters, and many other items. Of special note is the Cargo for Conservation, wildlife items confiscated by the Service from the illegal trade in animal parts and products and used to deliver a "buyer beware message". The Wildlife Forever CD-ROM guide serves as the main curriculum guide for the trunk. The Wildlife Trunk was assembled in part by University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point intern Katie Bares. Bares' internship was funded by the Midwest Interpretive Association. Partners include: Midwest Interpretive Association, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point 2/11/99

### **National Wildlife Refuge Week Photo Contest**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-Winona Dist.*

Upper Mississippi River NW&FR.-Winona District and Trempealeau NWR celebrated National Wildlife Refuge Week by initiating a photo contest highlighting Refuge people, landscapes and wildlife. The Friends of the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR.-Bob Pohl Chapter agreed to help organize and publicize the event as well as provide awards to participants. Forty-two entries were received by the Jan. 15 deadline. Three local professional photographers judged the contest. The winning photos were displayed at Winona National Bank, Trempealeau NWR and Upper Mississippi River NW&FR.-Winona District. Several participants agreed to allow their photos to be dis-



played on Refuge kiosks, and in home pages and publications. Partners include: Friends of the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR and Trempealeau NWR - Bob Pohl Chapter  
2/12/99

### **Necedah NWR Goes Cross Country Skiing**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On February 13, 1999, 13 community members rented cross country skis from the Friends of Necedah NWR and took to the woods. Despite spring-like conditions, the group learned techniques basic to this winter sport. After an indoor orientation, the group tackled various terrain. Topics for the workshop included equipment types, clothing needed, conquering falls, and different strides used when skiing. OA Clerk Rabuck led the group. 2/13/99

### **Horicon NWR Hosts Friends and Neighbors Gathering**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Fifty friends and neighbors attended a chili dinner, funded by Midwest Interpretive Association, and presentation by Horicon NWR staff. Refuge staff recapped the accomplishments of 1998 and provided a sneak preview of 1999 activities. This annual event was well-received and many positive comments were heard. 2/18/99

### **Savanna Saved at Necedah NWR**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On February 20, 1999, 13 community members attended

a savanna slide show and safety orientation before heading out onto the refuge to aid in restoration work on a savanna unit. Education included the history of savannas, their importance and facts on the biodiversity found in them. The volunteers burned off slash piles left after logging operations removed selected trees from the unit. A prescribed burn will take place on the unit later in the spring. Lunch was provided to participants by the Friends of Necedah NWR. 2/20/99

### **Accessibility Issues Examined at Necedah NWR**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On February 20, 1999, Refuge staff met with a disabled visitor and a representative from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to discuss the accessibility of Refuge facilities. A tour of current structures was given and included a fishing pier, trail heads, observation decks and tower, and a look at trail surfaces on site. Several suggestions were made and taken under advisement including: leveling existing trail surfaces, adding accessibility text to refuge literature, correcting access ramps to decks and improvements to trails through wet areas. The group plans to get together again in April to examine plans for a new fishing pier and to look at the accessible duck blind as well as option for maneuvering on the current trails. 2/20/99

### **Missouri Hunter Fined for Killing Trumpeter Swan**

*St. Peters Law Enforcement*

A Reynolds County, Missouri man paid a \$ 750.00 federal fine for killing a trumpeter swan. The man reported the killing to the local conservation agent and stated that he had seen the "white goose" in a field and walked up to it and it wouldn't fly. He came back later that day and shot the swan instead of letting coyotes get it. The man went home, breasted out the "white goose" and called the local agent who then contacted Service Special Agents. It was determined by other witnesses that the swan had been seen flying earlier and that it had become semi-tame. 2/25/99

### **Society of Range Management Visits DeSoto NWR**

*DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge*

Forty-two participants from the Society of Range Management International Conference in Omaha, Neb., recently visited DeSoto NWR. Participants learned about the refuge's biology and land management program, toured the visitor center, and discussed the results of two major wildlife research projects recently completed at the refuge. One project was a seven year white-tailed deer telemetry study and the other was a non-game grassland bird study. 2/25/99



### **Joint Press Conference on Gray Wolf Management Plan** *External Affairs*

The Service participated in a joint news conference with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to announce the release of Minnesota's draft gray wolf management plan, census figures and proposed legislation to enact the plan. Service representatives then participated in several media interviews. We also distributed a Service news release and a Service-prepared wolf newsletter. 2/25/99

### **Waterfowl Ground Counts Increased on Upper Mississippi**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

In October 1998, Wildlife Biologist Lara Hill designed and conducted the first year of a comprehensive waterfowl ground study of lower Pool 8 on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge-LaCrosse District. The study involved two randomly selected survey dates per week from the first week of October until ice up. There are 11 survey sites, which are strategically placed along Minnesota Hwy. 26 to allow a good overall view of the river's lower Pool 8. At each site, the number and species of waterfowl are recorded for use in a database. Any waterfowl rafts/concentrations are depicted on a map to be digitized into a Geographic Information System (GIS) in order to show areas of the Pool with the highest use. Survey were conducted 22 times last year, resulting in a

count of more than 825,000 waterfowl. The GIS products have proven to be very valuable at showing the areas most used by large concentrations of diving ducks in the lower open Pool, and areas used most by Canada geese and tundra swans behind the shelter of the Phase 1 Environmental Management Program (EMP) islands. The data will be used for many purposes such as evaluation of the proposed year 2000 lower Pool 8 water level reduction, and the EMP island construction projects. 1/1/99

### **53 Percent of Nestbaskets Successful on Detroit Lakes WMD**

*Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District*

Of 128 nesting baskets placed in wetlands on waterfowl production areas at Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District, 39 successfully used by mallards to produce 312 ducklings; and 35 nests were used by Canada geese to produce 210 goslings. There was no evidence of nest predation on any of the nesting baskets and eight of the successful baskets had two nests in them. Partners include: volunteers and Ducks Unlimited. 1/11/99

### **Rydell NWR Hosts Second Groundhog's Day Winterfest**

*Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District*

Friends of the Rydell Refuge and several volunteers hosted the second annual Groundhog's Day Winterfest Sunday, Feb. 7, 1999, at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge. An estimated 150 visitors participated in activi-

ties such as horse drawn sleigh rides, cross-county skiing, snowshoeing, schmoosh races, whappit, and the snowsnake toss. In addition to activities, visitors learned more about the Service and other programs available at Rydell NWR. Partners include: Friends of the Rydell Refuge and volunteers. 2/7/99

### **Region's Biologists Focus on Ecosystem Approach at St. Louis Training Forum**

*Region 3*

Approximately 220 biologists attended "Biology and the Ecosystem Approach: Putting the Pieces Together," a training forum for all biologists in Region 3. The four-day forum was held in February in St. Louis, Mo. Forum topics included trust resource overviews, Program overviews, habitat conservation, research, monitoring and data management, population management, adaptive resource management, and challenges facing biologists. Many biologists gave presentations, all focused on the Ecosystem Approach. Partners include: Missouri Department of Conservation, Colorado State University, Iowa State University. 2/12/99

### **Necedah Manager Meets with U.S. Senator Feingold**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR Manager Larry Wargowsky was invited and participated in a listening session with U.S. Senator Russell D Feingold on February 15, 1999, in Necedah, Wis. Wargowsky discussed refuge

issues with Congressional Aid Matt Nicholay. The Refuge Manager met with Senator Feingold at his invitation to attend a listening session in Necedah NWR. Refuge issues were discussed. 2/15/99

### **Annual Report Documents Region's Accomplishments, Lists Goals**

#### *External Affairs*

The first comprehensive collection of activities, accomplishments and goals of Region 3 programs and ecosystem teams was published in February 1999, after months of work by External Affairs staff and volunteers. The "Region 3 Fiscal Year 1998 Annual Report" contains more than 1,300 reports filed via the Accomplishment Reporting System during the fiscal year by staff from ecological services and law enforcement field offices, national wildlife refuges/wetland management districts and other Service programs. The 380-page report was published electronically in portable document format (.pdf) and is available for download on the Region 3 Web site: (<http://midwest.fws.gov>). The Report also contains a 94-page Executive Summary that summarizes the year's accomplishments and Fiscal Year 1999 goals for each Region 3 program and ecosystem team. 2/25/99

### **"Wolf Tracks" Keeps Public Informed of Wolf Issues**

#### *Regional Office - Region 3*

In response to the hundreds of requests to receive up to date information on wolf issues in the lower 48 states, staff from Ecological Service and Exter-

nal Affairs have developed a mailing called "Wolf Tracks." The first issue focuses on the upcoming proposal to reclassify/delist, explains the rule making process, summarizes state and tribal management plans and provides updates on the Mexican and Rocky Mountain wolf reintroduction programs. On February 25, 950 copies Wolf Tracks were mailed to interested individuals and an additional 400 people were notified of the publications location on the web. 2/25/99

### **Volunteer of the Year Recognized**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-McGregor District*

The McGregor District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge recently recognized their volunteer of the year, Tom Sandersfeld from Elkader, Iowa. Mr. Sandersfeld was awarded a plaque at a luncheon held in Elkader on February 26. His name was also engraved on a plaque displayed in the District's Visitor Contact Station. Mr. Sandersfeld conducted frog and toad surveys for the district. Completions of the surveys would not have been possible without his help. The surveys are done at night by listening to frog and toad calls and recording an index of abundance. The district truly appreciated the odd hours that Mr. Sandersfeld worked to accomplish the surveys. 2/26/99

### **Horicon NWR Hosts Meeting for Fox River NWR**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Horicon NWR hosted a successful meeting at Fox River NWR March 4, 1999. The purpose of the meeting was for neighbors and other interested people to provide input on the Fox River NWR, especially regarding the current hunting program. About 30 people attended and about 11 people responded with comments by mail, phone and fax. The meeting was a success, although the opinions ran from one extreme to the other. However, the people were heard and that was appreciated. An annual meeting will be held every year. Refuge staff will discuss the need for any changes to the refuge and will then inform all those who attended. 3/4/99

### **Service Special Agent Honored by State Agency**

#### *Madison Law Enforcement*

Two Service Special Agents, assigned to the Madison Law Enforcement Office, were honored on March 4, 1999 by the South Central Region Conservation Officers of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Special Agents Ed Spoon and Greg Jackson each received a framed Certificate of Appreciation. Each certificate reads, "....is commended by the South Central Region Wardens for his assistance to the Wisconsin Warden Service. You have provided assistance to Wisconsin wardens with lengthy and complex natural resources investigations. Your dedication and cooperation, along with the

use of your investigative abilities has resulted in successful completion of several investigations. Your distinguished service to the warden force and the citizens of the State of Wisconsin is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your efforts and dedication.

3/4/99

### **Fee Hunting Workshop**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Refuge Manager Adams and Assistant Manager Fisher participated in a Fee Hunting Workshop sponsored by the Prairie Hills RC&D. They provided information on the Service Private Lands Program, as well as information on restoring grassland and forest habitat. Approximately 50 people attended the Workshop.

3/5/99

### **Special Agent Gives Presentation to University of Wisconsin Students**

#### *Madison Law Enforcement*

Special Agent Ed Spoon was an invited guest at a meeting of the Student Law Enforcement Association, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. SA Spoon talked about the position of Service special agent and showed video clips of major case take-downs. SA Spoon informed the students about SCEP and STEP Programs.

3/9/99

### **Active Eagles Nest on Catechu NWR**

#### *Catechu National Wildlife Refuge*

On Lake Chautauqua's north Pool, a dead tree which supported a bald eagles nest was blown down in early winter.

The eagles quickly rebuilt the nest and it appears to be active. 3/10/99

### **Drieslein Receives U.S. Army Commander's Award**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

At the recent UMRCC Annual Meeting, District Manager Bob Drieslein was presented the U.S. Army Commander's Award for his work on the Wabasha Prairie dredge disposal project. This award ranks directly below the Outstanding Civilian Service Award, and is something that we can take a good deal of pride in. Bob devised a very innovative way to handle a politically and environmentally sensitive problem at that site. The degree of interaction with U.S. Senators and Representatives's offices, State and Federal agencies, the local County Board, and local citizens was intense. In the end, even the most skeptical neighbors seemed satisfied with the product that Bob devised. Bob not only squirreled away 500,000 cubic yards of fill in an environmentally sound and aesthetically pleasing way, but in the process he had the contractor create some shallow wetlands on Service and state properties, and donate approximately 120 acres to the refuge. Given the local attitudes towards dredged material placement, this was a remarkable piece of work which has implications for how we deal with these situations in the future. 3/10/99

### **Service Participants in Cabela's Spring Expo**

#### *External Affairs*

External Affairs, Federal Aid, and Refuge personnel from the Regional Office staffed a booth at the first Spring Expo held at the Cabela's Retail store in Owatonna, Minn. -- the largest outdoor recreation retail facility in the United States. We met with over 49,000 shoppers over three days, educating them on Service Programs and promoting the National Wildlife Refuge System. We were the only federal agency invited to participate, which we did at no cost to the Service. Our participation was authorized under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cabela's. The MOU was initiated by a Regional Service Outreach Coordinator. As a result of our successful participation at this event, we have been invited back to participate in a similar fall event. 3/10/99

### **LaCrosse FHC Hosts Introduction to Fish Health Management Course**

#### *LaCrosse Fish Health Center*

Staff of the La Crosse Fish Health Center, Onalaska, WI, in cooperation with the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV, presented the course, Introduction to Fish Health Management, in Onalaska on March 15-19, 1999. This was the 31st offering of the course and the 2nd time offered this year due to the popularity of the course. The 16 students learned microscope use, identification of parasitic, bacterial and viral

pathogens, use of chemotherapeutants and how to calculate treatment levels, sample preparation and shipping methods, and much more. John Whitney, Audrey Dikkeboom, Ken Phillips, Terry Ott, Becky Lasee and Rick Nelson were instructors for the course and Janet Beitlich served as course administrator. This course is intended as an introductory training course for hatchery biologists, private fish culturists, field managers and others with an interest in fish health management. An intermediate level course in fish diagnostic methods will be offered in August 1999.  
3/15/99

### **Congressional State Fact Books Completed**

#### *External Affairs*

These state fact books will be used to brief Congressional Members, and their staff, on Service facilities and Programs operating within their state. These books will also be available for Region 3 personnel to assist with outreach to our partners and the public. Each fact book contains an individual sheet on facilities and programs operating within the state. Each individual sheet was developed by the facility or program manager and highlights activities specific to the site. The information gathered for these fact books has also been used to update the Region 3 home page, which recently exceeded one million visitors. A complete copy of each fact book is also available, in PDF format, on the Region 3 home page. This allows Service employees, our partners, and the public to download, and

print, a complete fact book as needed. (Fact books available on the home page do not have budget or personnel information.) These books will be printed in small quantity and reprinted only as needed. This enables the Region to constantly review and update the fact books, ensuring they contain the most current and relevant information. 3/18/99

### **Special Agents Kocal Teaches at Iowa Law Enforcement Academy**

#### *Des Moines Law Enforcement*

The Iowa Law Enforcement Community is becoming more knowledgeable of Federal Wildlife Laws due to the ongoing efforts of Special Agent Walt Kocal. For the past several years, Agent Kocal has taught a class to nearly every Basic Law Enforcement Class that attends the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Des Moines. The ILEA is mandatory for all Law Enforcement Officers in the state including Conservation Officers, Sheriff's Deputies, Police Officers and Highway Patrol. The training presented by Agent Kocal emphasizes awareness and understanding the Lacey Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Endangered Species Act and other Federal Laws regarding the illegal commercialization of wildlife within the Iowa Law Enforcement Community. The end result is enhancement of Federal Wildlife Law Enforcement in the state of Iowa.  
3/18/99

### **Federal Aid Participates at Cabela's Spring Expo**

#### *Federal Aid*

Federal Aid, External Affairs, Refuges, Private Lands, Migratory Birds, and North American Waterfowl Management Plan personnel staffed two booths at Cabela's Spring Expo in Owatonna, Minn., on March 19-22. The Expo was developed to offer manufacturers the opportunity to show off new products to customers. Federal Aid and External Affairs were invited in addition to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Over 49,000 customers entered the store during this three day event. Several contacts were made with manufacturers and discussions of using the Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration logos were initiated. Partners: External Affairs Division of Refuges Endangered Species. 3/19/99

### **Prescribed Burn at Wapello District**

#### *Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge- Wapello District*

On March 17, 18, and 19, the Wapello District of the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge completed three prescribed burns on the Horseshoe Bend Division, totaling 1,26 acres. The burns were done for the purpose of managing native prairies and enhancing stands of prairie cordgrass, setting back invading trees and brush, and fuel reduction. If weather conditions remain favorable, the District has about 900 additional acres planned for prescribed fire. 3/19/99



### **Necedah NWR Hosts Fire Pack Test Site**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR staff arranged for pack test coverage by volunteer Necedah Fire Department's Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) personnel. The no-fee coverage resulted in nine Necedah, one Winona District, one Trempealeau, three Wisconsin Conservation Corp, and two U.S. Army Corps of Engineer personnel being able to take and pass this fire qualifying test, allowing these personnel to participate in burning. Two levels were given, and all personnel taking their particular level passed. Partners: Necedah Fire Department.

3/19/98

### **Workshop at Necedah NWR is for the Birds**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Thirty-five people attended a nest box building workshop Saturday, March 20, 1999, at Necedah NWR. Individuals chose bluebird, bat, or wood duck house kits to assemble. The Friends group obtained mostly donated lumber with the boards pre-cut by the Wisconsin Conservation Corps crew. Refreshments were provided by the Friends of Necedah. Instruction was led by OA Clerk Rabuck with assistance from a volunteer. The nest box kits included educational messages on each species and directions for box placement and maintenance. Attendees ranged in age from 3 to 73, with each attendee looking forward to spring migration bringing back the

animals that will use these new homes. 3/20/98

### **Girl Scouts Donate Nest Boxes to Necedah NWR**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Saturday, March 20, Girl Scout Troop 140 from Necedah, Wis., attended a nest box building workshop at the Necedah NWR. The ten scouts assembled five bluebird houses and donated them to the refuge to help create usable areas for bluebirds. The girls earned wildlife badges with their efforts. The troop members also made a wood duck house and a bat box that they took with them to set near their meeting facility. 3/20/98

### **EPA's Sixth Annual Watershed Partnership Seminar**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Upper Mississippi River NWR Watershed Biologist Hawkins attended the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Sixth Annual Watershed Partnership Seminar, March 1-12 at the Office of Personnel Management's Western Management Development Center in Aurora, CO. Forty individuals representing state and federal agencies, as well as non-government organizations, attended the training session. Hawkins was the fourth Service employee to participate. The training program is designed to enhance leadership and team-building, as well as technical proficiency relative to watershed protection, as mandated under the federal Clean Water Action Program.

3/20/99

### **Hunter Education Students Certified with Safety**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge - LaCrosse District*

The Visitor Center of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge - LaCrosse District was the site of a Wisconsin Hunter Education certification course. Thirty-three students were certified through the course and were given the opportunity to use the SAFETY (Simulated Action Firearm Education Training for Youth) system to provide a realistic exercise. Partners: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources hunter education instructors 3/20/99

### **CITES Training Provided to Wisconsin DNR Employees**

*Madison Law Enforcement*  
Special Agent Ed Spoon gave a one-hour presentation to 20 wildlife biologists and wildlife technicians during a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fur training workshop. Spoon discussed Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) import-export procedures, CITES and Lacey Act enforcement, and the critical importance of DNR-Service cooperation. 3/23/99

### **Japanese Students Visit Trempealeau NWR**

#### *Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge*

Trempealeau NWR hosted a visit by 16 students and adults from Kogota, Japan, on March



23, 1999. The students were winners of an English speaking contest sponsored by the Kogota International Friendship Club. Refuge Manager Frietsche talked to the group about the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the National Wildlife Refuge System's role in the conservation of migratory birds, fish, other wildlife, and plants. The visitors liked the wolf posters and Refuge Week posters which they took back with them to Japan.

3/23/99

**Record Entries for Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Contest**  
*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On March 24, the sixth annual Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Stamp art judging contest was held. Out of 1,173 entries, a canvasback drawing by a 16 year old was selected Best of Show to represent Wisconsin in the national competition in Washington DC. Dan Koepsell's art was selected by a panel of five judges with a wide variety of backgrounds, all of them relating to the art world and/or biology. The Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA) arranged for the judges to donate their time for this youth event. WWA also provides prizes for the 100 pieces of art selected for recognition. This year's entry number of 1,173 was the highest yet - compared to last year when 849 entries were received. Matt Nickolay, Aid to Senator Russell Feingold was present for the judging. The event was covered by a reporter from the Juneau County Star Times. Nineteen visitors came to observe, including two

students who had artwork entered.. 3/24/99

**Clam Investigation Presented to Illinois DNR In-Service**

*Peoria Law Enforcement*  
During March 1999, Service Special Agent Jerry Sommers and Illinois Conservation Police Officer Scott Wright, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR), presented the evolution of the Illinois clam diggers investigation - from its inception to the sentencing of each defendant, to the Illinois Conservation Police Officers attending Law Enforcement In-Service training in Effingham, Ill. The DNR officers exhibited much enthusiasm by asking questions and discussing highlights of the case. Each presentation ran approximately 30 minutes longer than expected. The logistics and problems that were encountered were topics of the talk. The Illinois contingent of officers were elated with the outcome of the case. 3/26/99

**Suspect Sentenced for Mussel Violations**

*Peoria Law Enforcement*  
On March 26, 1999, Senior Judge Charles Wolle, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Iowa, Davenport, Iowa, sentenced Craig Allen Smith for violations of the Lacey Act including the illegal transportation and sale of freshwater mussels in interstate commerce. Smith illegally harvested the mussels from the Rock River (closed to musseling) in Illinois and sold the mussels to Butch Ballenger, owner of Mississippi Valley Shell Company,

Muscatine, Iowa. Judge Wolle sentenced Smith to 31 months in prison, two years of supervised probation upon release from prison, Smith was banned from clamming during his supervised release and he is to pay \$28,839.75 in restitution to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and a \$50 special assessment to the Crime Victim's fund. Judge Wolle said the Lacey Act has an important purpose -- to put teeth into state wildlife laws -- and that Smith deserves the full punishment that the Lacey Act allows. Smith will also be required to undergo mental health treatment during his supervised release. 3/26/99

**Green Bay Field Office Receives Taking Wing Award**

*Green Bay Field Office*  
The Green Bay Field Office was recently presented with the Forest Service 1998 Taking Wing Award, for its partnership role in the restoration of the Wilson Flowage wetland complex. The Taking Wing Award recognizes Forest Service partnership projects for outstanding wetland habitat improvement work. The award, recently presented at the 1999 North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference, was accepted by Regional Director Bill Hartwig on behalf of the Green Bay Field Office. Wilson Flowage, located on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in northern Wisconsin, consists of two impoundments totaling 266 acres. The project involved reconstruction of failing earthen dams and the installation of water control structures for habitat management capabilities. The com-

pleted project provides high quality foraging habitat for waterfowl, eagles, osprey, and numerous other wildlife species, as well as allowing for the development of a northern pike and pan fishery. 3/27/99

### **Recreational Fishing Project for the Disabled**

*Upper Mississippi River - LaCrosse*

An area of approximately 60-x100-feet was dredged to provide a bank fishing location directly adjacent to a popular boat landing on Lake Onalaska (Upper Mississippi River Pool 7). The bank adjacent to the dredged area was rip-rapped to stabilize the bank. Phase II of the project will involve black-topping a wheelchair accessible pad with wheelchair bumpers, installing benches, providing handicapped parking areas and installing a disabled accessible fishing/boating dock. 3/29/99

### **Refuge Officers Complete Firearms Training**

*Madison Law Enforcement*  
Service Special Agent Firearms Instructors coordinated and conducted firearms re-qualification and training for approximately 80 Region 3 Refuge Law Enforcement Officers during the officer's annual in-service training sessions at Camp Dodge, Johnston, Iowa. A training team from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Glynco, GA trained the officers in proper use of cover, utilizing paintball and Simunitions-equipped weapons. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Law Enforcement loaned an

\$80,000 FATS (firearms training simulator) machine to the Service Division of Law Enforcement, for use during the in-service sessions. Eighty Refuge Officers were trained on the simulator, in which highly realistic scenarios are projected onto a screen in front of the officer. The officer uses a specially-equipped handgun. The scenarios are meant to train the officers in proper decision/reaction techniques, i.e., shoot/no-shoot scenarios. Officers fired two reduced-light handgun courses utilizing techniques to shoot while holding a flashlight and handgun. Over the weekend, between sessions, 12 Refuge Officers and five Special Agents completed an optional 15 hour basic rifle training course, which qualifies them to carry a Service-issued Ruger Mini-14 rifle. A total of four Refuge Officer Firearms Instructors and nine Special Agent Firearms Instructors worked closely together to offer this intensive, innovative and work-relevant training. Partners: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Law Enforcement Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Big Creek State Park, Iowa Law Enforcement Academy, Iowa Army National Guard. 3/30/99

### **Spring Wild Fish Health Assessments**

*LaCrosse Fish Health Center / Genoa National Fish Hatchery*  
On March 29, April 6, and April 9, 1999, Audrey Dikkeboom, Ken Phillips, John Whitney, Becky Lasee and Rick Nelson of the La Crosse Fish Health Center collected health

samples from 445 fish representing 23 different species in Pool 9, of the Upper Mississippi River. Center staff appreciated the assistance from Todd Turner, Dan Kumlin and Jeff Lockington of the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in collection of the fish. Pending completion of laboratory assays, results will be entered into the National Fish Health Database. 3/30/99

### **New Web Site for the LaCrosse Fish Health Center**

*LaCrosse Fish Health Center*  
Terry Ott and Becky Lasee of the La Crosse Fish Health Center, Onalaska, Wis., assisted Yvonne Hawkins, Computer Specialist, Division of Fish & Wildlife Management in developing a web site for the LaCrosse Fish Health Center. The web site has already had numerous visitors and is accessible via the Internet at 3/30/99

### **Middle School Demonstration**

*LaCrosse Fish Health Center*  
Becky Lasee and Audrey Dikkeboom, Fishery Biologists, LaCrosse Fish Health Center, Onalaska, Wisconsin, participated in an Environmental Workshop for middle school students (grades 6-8) at Milrose-Mindoro Middle School, Mar. 11, 1999. Approximately 50 students participated, learning about Mississippi River fish and wildlife. 3/30/99

### **University of Wisconsin-Madison Students Birding at Necedah NWR**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Saturday, April 3, 1999, a group of ornithology students and instructors from the University of Wisconsin-Madison visited the Necedah NWR in search of migratory birds. The students toured the refuge practicing their identification skills and adding new species to their sightings lists. The group also visited the administrative office, viewed the displays and talked with refuge staff.  
4/3/99

### **Necedah NWR Hosts Second Nest Box Building Workshop**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Saturday, April 3, 1999, 10 community members participated in the second and final nest box building workshop of the season. Attendees included students through seniors. Participants were given one of three options when choosing a nest structure: bat house, bluebird house, or wood duck box. Included with the hands-on building class, attendees also gained knowledge on maintenance of their structure and installation instructions. All proceeds from the kits benefit the Friends of Necedah NWR. 4/3/99

### **National Park Service Crew Assists with Refuge Burn**

#### *Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge*

The Buffalo River Prescribed Fire Module from the National Park Service is assisting Effigy Mounds National Monument near the Driftless Area NWR

at McGregor, Iowa. Thanks to the cooperation of monument personnel, the fire module was able to conduct a prescribed burn on the Driftless Area NWR just before rains came on April 8. The burn included remnant native prairie and was done to reduce woody vegetation encroachment. The fire required more people than the refuge has available and would not have been completed without the aid of the module and their equipment. 4/8/99

### **Earthday Celebrated at Meredosia NWR**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Approximately 280 local students and teachers joined Refuge staff April 22, 1999, to observe Earthday at Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge, part of Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Students and teachers assisted the refuge by planting over 1,000 live prairie forbs of 15 different species, seeded a field with prairie grass and forb seed, helped maintain the hiking trail by raking gravel and replacing boards, cleaned up trash, and built bluebird and screech owl boxes. Students also roasted hotdogs for lunch, and learned about bluebirds through a slide presentation.  
4/22/99

### **Groups Help Cleanup Refuge During Earth Day Celebration at Chautauqua NWR**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Earth Day was celebrated on Illinois River Refuge's, Chautauqua NWR April 24, 1999, with 20 volunteers from Havana High School Ecology

Club, Americorps, and members of the Friend of the Illinois River group. Volunteers participated in a morning cleanup of the Chautauqua Lake Road. After lunch binoculars were handed out and a spotting scope was set up to allow volunteers to observe bald eagle nesting behavior on the active refuge eagle nest.  
4/24/99

### **Service Assists GLIFWC With Walleye Estimates for the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin**

#### *LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office*

From mid-April to mid-May 1999, the Service's LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) assisted the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and Ashland FRO with walleye population surveys on more than 20 lakes in northern Wisconsin (Ceded Territory of Wisconsin.) Surveys are conducted during the spawning season, which occurs usually during a three week period after the ice leaves the lakes. Night electrofishing is the method used to sample walleye and a mark/recapture technique is used to estimate populations. The population estimates help managers make sound management decisions and set safe harvest levels. The Wisconsin DNR also conducts numerous population surveys, coordinating with GLIFWC on which agency will work on certain lakes. Partners include: Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and Wisconsin DNR.  
4/26/99

### **Center for Native American Cultures Provides Eagle to Service Repository**

#### *Chicago Law Enforcement*

On April 29, 1999, the Schingoethe Center for Native American Cultures, Aurora University, Aurora, Ill., contacted Service Special Agent Joe Budzyn regarding a mounted bald eagle they'd received a few years ago from an unknown donor. The Center told Budzyn that it wanted to keep the eagle and asked how it could legally retain possession of it. Budzyn informed the Center of the Service's eagle repository and the Center agreed to abandon the eagle to the Service for transfer to the repository. The eagle was picked up from the Center April 30, 1999, and transferred to the repository. 4/30/99

### **Insect Expo 1999 Attracts 3,000 Students**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Three thousand students, in grades K-8 participated in Insect Expo South sponsored by the Refuge and the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS). Students learned about the value of insects and surrounding habitat. Insect Expo has been sponsored by the Illinois Natural History Survey for the past four years. Refuge staff partnered with INHS staff and brought the event to southern Illinois-Cache River Wetlands. The event was held in Shawnee College and included 25 interactive exhibits/activities. Partners include: Illinois Natural History Survey-Illinois Department of Natural Re-

sources, Cache River State Natural Area, Natural Resource Conservation Service-SWCD, Anna-Jonesboro High School, Century School, Mingo Job Corps, and Shawnee Community College. 4/30/99

### **Four Pair of Sandhill Cranes Breeding On Refuge**

#### *Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge*

On April 24, 1999, seven volunteers coordinated by the International Crane Foundation counted sandhill cranes on Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge from 5:30-7:30 a.m.. The volunteers were spread throughout the refuge in likely crane habitat and compared notes afterward to eliminate duplicate sightings. A total of thirteen sandhill cranes were observed or heard including four breeding pair. 4/30/99

### **Volunteers Participate in Necedah Crane Count**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On April 24, volunteers participated in the Juneau County Midwest Sandhill crane Count. The annual event is sponsored by International Crane Foundation. Necedah NWR had 10 volunteers donating 115 hours training, scouting, and counting cranes. When the tallies came in after two hours in the marshes, 210 cranes were counted. Friends of Necedah provided refreshments after the count. Juneau county had additional volunteers counting cranes throughout the county. 4/30/99

### **Necedah NWR Spring Prescribe Burns 2,776 Acres**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff and the Refuge-based Wisconsin Conservation Corps crew prescribe burned 12 units, totaling 2,776 acres. The average cost per acre treated was \$1.99. Included in costs are wages, equipment operation costs, fuel, and any operational expenses. Three wildfires were also part of this spring's activities totaling 25 acres costing \$6,614 or \$264.56 per acre. The Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources aided in putting out one wildfire on refuge property over 20 acres with two tractor plow units, two type 6 engines and 3,000 gallons of water/foam mixture were dropped from an air tanker in five loads. 4/30/99

### **Cypress Creek Refuge Reforest 320 Acres**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

This spring included a record for the most seedlings planted on the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge between February and April 1999. Refuge staff reforested 320 acres with 143,000 native hardwood seedlings. Seedlings were acquired from the IDNR-Division of Forestry and the Finkle Foundation. 4/30/99

### **Refuge Staff Assist With Stewardship Week**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff assisted with Stewardship Week, a school



event sponsored by the Forest Resource Center. The event was held the week of April 28 for K-6th grade students within southern Illinois counties. Refuge staff ran 20-minute sessions on wetlands. Participants included 678 students. 4/30/99

**Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Hosts Crane Counters**  
*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On April 10, a group of citizens looking to help wildlife attended an educational meeting on the International Crane Foundation's 27th Annual Midwest Crane Count. The 28 attendees learned about basic crane biology, history, and identification. Counters traveled to the marshes on April 24 in an effort to get an accurate count of the number of individual and breeding pairs of sandhill cranes. A slide presentation was given by Jennifer Rabuck on the many aspects of cranes in Wisconsin. Arris Sullivan, the Juneau County Crane Count Coordinator, gave participants details on recording and tallying their sightings. 4/30/99

**Hunter/Trapper Clinic Successful**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge - LaCrosse District*

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Trappers Association, Refuge, and local trappers partnered to sponsor a Hunter/Trapper information clinic at the Refuge April 10. Approximately 30 La Crosse, Wis. area trappers and waterfowl hunters attended the clinic to learn about trap-

ping sets, discuss ethics between the two user groups and to discuss changes in the state regulations which will affect the Wisconsin waterfowl hunters and trappers. This year will mark the first time in over 20 years that the two user groups will be sharing the resource at the same time. 4/30/99

**Wisconsin Town Receives Incidental Take Permit**

*Regional Office and Green Bay Field Office*

The Town of Rome, Wisconsin, received an incidental take permit under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act authorizing take of the endangered Earner Blue Butterfly in association with road reconstruction along Badger Avenue, Adams County. The area affected includes approximately 10 acres of potential habitat for the butterfly and was determined to be a low effect Habitat Conservation Plan. The Town will minimize effects on the butterfly and mitigate for the proposed take. The permit is in effect through 2029. 4/30/99

**Wisconsin Statewide HCP Application Received**

*Regional Office/Ecological Services*

After 5 years of development the Wisconsin DNR has submitted an application for a statewide incidental take permit covering impacts to the Federally endangered Earner blue butterfly. The State and 25 other Partners to the Habitat Conservation Plan have developed the HCP, including conservation efforts

across the butterfly's range, adaptive management, and significant outreach efforts to conserve and manage lands to benefit the Earner blue butterfly. The HCP's stated goal is no net loss of butterfly habitat over the life of the plan. Partners include: Wisconsin DNR and 25 other partners, including forest industry, utility companies, conservation organizations, county forests. 4/30/99

**Pool 8 Island Phase II Construction Restarts**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

The Phase II, Lower Pool 8 Island Project construction resumed including the construction of the Stoddard Bay Habitat Project for completion in the summer of 1999. The construction of the seven new islands restores a 500-acre backwater complex. The project improves this area for fish, migratory birds, and a variety Partners include: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 4/30/99

**Eagles Hatch at Necedah NWR**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

The bald eagle pair nesting on the Refuge since 1995 again incubated and hatched this spring. At least one healthy eaglet was spotted by scope. Eagles were observed incubating from March 1 through April 14, 1999. Bald eagles have used this nest since 1995, hatching eaglets the past four

years. On April 15, staff observed that hatching appeared to have occurred as the adult eagle discontinued incubation and was feeding young. One eaglet was observed by scope on May 4. 4/30/99

### **Necedah Hosts First Annual Earth Day Cleanup**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Earth Day activities were held on the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge April 28, 1999. Postponed from the previous week due to weather, the event hosted 230 area elementary students. The K-5 graders cleaned up over 30 miles of refuge public roadsides, including parking areas and kiosk sites. At the end of the day, over 330 pounds of trash and recyclables were gathered by the students. Prizes were awarded from groups gathering the most trash, most recyclables, and for additional categories such as, the oldest item recovered, and the item requiring the longest time to decompose. Each student was given a tree seedling and plant seeds to take home in honor of Earth Day. Prizes and refreshments were provided by the Friends of Necedah NWR. 4/30/99

### **Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Celebrates Wildlife Week**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On April 17, community members attended a National Wildlife Week open house at Necedah *National Wildlife Refuge*. Activities included a massasauga rattlesnake slide show, a prescribed burning

presentation, the unveiling of the new Truax drill, a guided refuge tour, and a sideshow on the Yellow River Area. Attendees also had the opportunity to attend a Friends of Necedah meeting and test their wildlife knowledge with a quiz on a variety of wildlife related items. Refreshments and prizes were provided by the Friends of Necedah. An additional 38 area schools were provided with information packets obtained from the American Wildlife Federation - reaching 4,750 students in 3-6 grades. 4/30/99

### **Refuge Receives Support from Waterfowl Group**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge - LaCrosse District*

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association donated 1,000 "Ducks at a Distance" books for use with the Refuge's Ducks-on-a-Stick Program. This educational Program reached over 6,000 people last year and continues to grow in popularity. The donated books will be used with youth groups to help teach waterfowl identification through hands-on learning with Ducks-on-a-Stick. 4/30/99

### **Leopold WMD Hosts Private Lands Meeting**

#### *Leopold Wetland Management District*

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program administered by Leopold Wetland Management District held its annual private lands coordination meeting. The meeting was attended by over 30 staff members from Farm Service Agency, NRCS, ACOE, Wisconsin Department of Natural

Resources and various private conservation organizations. Topics of discussion included: various conservation programs available, resources available from agencies and conservation groups, and wetland and upland restoration procedures. The Leopold staff conducts partners projects in 10 counties within the District. Partners include: Wisconsin DNR, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, various county land and water conservation districts, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. 4/30/99

### **Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Celebrates Wildlife Week**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On April 17, community members attended a National Wildlife Week open house at Necedah *National Wildlife Refuge*. Activities included a massasauga rattlesnake slide show, a prescribed burning presentation, the unveiling of the new Truax drill, a guided refuge tour, and a sideshow on the Yellow River Area. Attendees also had the opportunity to attend a Friends of Necedah meeting and test their wildlife knowledge with a quiz on a variety of wildlife related items. Refreshments and prizes were provided by the Friends of Necedah. An additional 38 area schools were provided with information packets obtained from the American Wildlife Federation - reaching 4,750 students in 3-6 grades. 4/30/99

### **Necedah NWR Attends Volunteer Fair**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff attended a volunteer fair held at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, April 20, 1999, setting up a display on volunteer opportunities at Necedah NWR.. Held in the school courtyard, exhibitors contacted students with a variety of majors and backgrounds recruiting for volunteers. Over 100 students picked up information on volunteer opportunities at the Refuge, of which 25 expressed interest in becoming volunteers. 4/30/99

### **13th Annual Class Trip to Necedah NWR**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On April 20, the River Valley High School Conservation class from Spring Green, Wisconsin, arrived at Necedah NWR at dawn with their teacher and bus driver. This school's classes of 40 students (juniors and seniors) have visited the refuge for field trips for 13 years, each spring and fall. Bio Tech Olson was on hand providing information and an orientation to the students, and later took them on a tour through the Ducks Unlimited cooperative project and up through the heart of the refuge for first hand looks at Service habitat management techniques and results. 4/30/99

### **Illinois River CCP Public Meetings**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Public involvement and scoping meetings were held the week

of April 19, 1999, as part of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Illinois River Refuge's. Meetings were held at Meredosia,, Henry, and Havana, Illinois. 4/30/99

### **Earth Day Celebrated at Meredosia NWR**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

On April 22, Earth Day was celebrated April 22, 1999 at Meredosia NWR with approximately 280 teachers and students participating from Meredosia elementary, junior and senior high schools. Students and teachers assisted the refuge by planting over 1,000 live prairie forbs, seeded prairie grasses and forbs, helped maintain the hiking trail, cleaned up trash, and built bluebird and screech owl nest boxes. Students also roasted hotdogs and saw a slide presentation on bluebirds. 4/30/99

### **Earth Day Celebrated at Catechu NWR**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

On April 24, Earth Day was celebrated on Catechu NWR with 20 volunteers from the Havana High School Ecology Club, Americorps, and members of the Friends of the Illinois River group. Volunteers participated in a morning clean-up of the Lake Catechu Road. After lunch, binoculars were handed out, and a spotting scope was set up to allow volunteers to observe bald eagle nesting behavior in an active refuge eagle nest. 4/30/99

### **Meeting on Weis Lake Habitat Restoration**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Refuge staff met with private landowners, Ducks Unlimited, and ARCS staff to discuss issues and possible action needed to resolve the drainage and habitat degradation problems on Weis Lake of the Cameron-Billsbach Division of the refuge and in the Crow Creek watershed. These issues were also discussed with members of the Illinois River Coordinating Council. Ducks Unlimited is interested in providing engineering and contracting services as well as money for restoration of the Weis Lake habitat. 4/30/99

### **LTRM Assists Refuge with North Pool Monitoring**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge*

The Long Term Resources Monitoring Project staff at Havana, Illinois have agreed to monitor water quality, invertebrates, fish and plant communities in the north pool of Catechu NWR to assist with evaluation of management of a backwater lake without river connectivity. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has stocked genetically correct bluegill and crappie. Large-mouth bass and catfish will as well. 4/30/99

### **Volunteer Orientation held at Trempealeau NWR**

#### *Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge*

Twenty volunteers attended an orientation workshop at Trempealeau NWR. The volunteers watched the newly released video "America's

National Wildlife Refuge System, Where Wildlife Comes First" viewed a multimedia slide show about Trempealeau NWR's wildlife, habitats and public use opportunities, and discussed administrative aspects of the volunteer program. In addition, there was time to meet new volunteers and socialize. 4/30/99

### **Elimination of Harmful Public Utility Lines Sought Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge**

Portions of 1942-era utility loop lines located on Crab Orchard NWR are no longer in use and need to be removed from the Refuge. In order to facilitate their removal and salvage, the utility lines were offered for sale to interested buyers. This process resulted in the sale of the utility lines in the amount of \$560. Removal is scheduled for within 100 calendar days of the date of sale. Removal of the obsolete utility lines will result in the enhancement/restoration of 4.36 acres of wildlife habitat on the Refuge. 4/30/99

### **Necedah Hosts First Annual Earth Day Cleanup Necedah National Wildlife Refuge**

On April 28, Earth Day activities were held on the Necedah National Wildlife refuge. The event was attended by 230 area elementary students. The students cleaned up over 30 miles of refuge roadsides, including parking areas and kiosk sites. At the end of the day, over 330 pounds of trash and recyclables were gathered by the students. Prizes were awarded from groups gather-

ing the most trash, most recyclables, and for additional categories such as, the oldest item recovered, and the item requiring the longest time to decompose. Each student was given a tree seedling to take home in honor of Earth Day. Prizes and refreshments were provided by the Friends of Necedah NWR. 4/30/99

### **Outstanding Turnout for Crane Count 1999 Horicon National Wildlife Refuge**

Horicon NWR hosted the annual Dodge county crane count. This year we had the best turnout ever of new volunteers for the crane count. Over 50 new people participated in the orientation meeting and crane count. Most years more than 25 sites go uncounted. This year we only had 12 sites that went uncounted. The great turnout can be attributed to better media attention. We had the best volunteer recruitment ever for the annual crane count. This year 121 people participated in counting 59 of the available sites in Dodge County. Partners include: International Crane Foundation and UW-Madison Wildlife Ecology class. 4/30/99

### **Eagles Hatch at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Necedah National Wildlife Refuge**

Bald eagles have been nesting on the Necedah NWR since 1995 and have hatched eaglets in the last four years. This year, eagles were observed incubating, March 1 through April 14. Hatching appears to have occurred on April 15 as

the adult eagle discontinued incubation and was feeding young. One eaglet was observed by spotting scope on May 4. 5/30/99

### **First Osprey Nest on Necedah NWR Necedah National Wildlife Refuge**

An active osprey nest was discovered on the Sprague Mather Flowage at Necedah NWR on April 29. The nest is on an artificial platform that was put up by former Biologist Richard Nord about 10 years ago. Since April 9, the female has been observed incubating on several occasions with hatching in May. This is the first active osprey nest Bio Tech Olson had seen in 20 years on the refuge. 4/30/99

### **Service, Partners Seek Solutions to Weis Lake Problems at Chautauqua NWR**

*Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*  
Refuge staff met with private land owners, Ducks Unlimited, and Natural Resource Conservation Service staff April 1, 1999, to discuss issues and possible actions needed to resolve drainage and habitat degradation problems on Weis Lake in the Cameron Unit of Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge in western Illinois. These issues were also discussed with members of the Illinois River Coordinating Council. Ducks Unlimited is interested in providing engineering and contracting services as well as funding restorations of the Weis lake habitat. Weis lake is in the Crow Creek watershed. 5/1/99



### **LTRM Staff Assists with Monitoring of Lake Chautauqua**

*Illinois River National Fish & Wildlife Refuge*

The Long Term Resource Monitoring Staff at Havana, Ill., has agreed to monitor water quality, invertebrates, fish and plant communities in the north pool of Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge to assist with evaluation of management of a backwater lake without river connectivity. The Illinois Department of Natural resources has stocked "genetically correct" bluegill and crappie. Largemouth bass and catfish will be stocked later this season. 5/1/99

### **Students Call Day of Tree Planting 'Best Day of Second Grade!'**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

On May 10, 1999, a group of 108 second graders and 26 high school students from La Crescent-Hokah Elementary/High School helped staff from the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge-La Crosse District, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plant 550 saplings on a quarter-mile section of old Highway 16 near LaCrescent, Minn. The section of highway was removed last fall as part of the City of La Crescent's Shore Acres Road Improvement Project. The restored area and adjoining wetlands (about 5 acres) were made part of the Refuge through a land exchange between the city and the Service. The kids were quoted as saying the experience was "the best day of second grade!" Part-

ners include: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, La Crescent-Hokah Elementary, La Crescent-Hokah High School, City of La Crescent. 5/14/99

### **Region 3 Congressional Briefings Cover Director's Priorities, Regional Issues**

*External Affairs*

Representatives from Region 3 briefed House and Senate authorizing committee staff and the Region 3 Congressional delegations on the Director's priorities and how the Region is implementing those as well as high profile issues such as the Canada lynx proposed listing, bald eagle and timber wolf proposed delistings, prairie habitat restoration, invasive species, and Great Lakes issues. Group briefings for the House and Senate were held on May 18, 1999. The group briefings were followed by courtesy visits to the 29 authorizing committee staff and the staff of the 114 member Region 3 Congressional delegation. The Congressional briefing representatives from Region 3 included: Jane West, Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist for Region 3; Brad Johnson, assistant regional director for Federal Aid; John Rogner, field supervisor, Chicago Field Office; Lee Herzberger, manager, Muscatatuck NWR; Nancy Gilbertson, manager, Neal Smith NWR; Doug Spencer, manager, Shiawassee NWR; Mike Murphy, manager, Hamden Slough NWR; Gerald Clawson, Mingo NWR; Larry Martin, manager, Ottawa NWR; Tom Busiahn, project leader, Ashland Fishery Resource Office; and Dave

Pederson, fishery biologist, Federal Aid. 5/18/99

### **LaCrosse Staff Assists With Regional Fishing Day Activities**

*LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office*

LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) co-sponsored the Tomah Veterans Administration Hospital's Fishing Day May 19. Approximately 100 patients participated, trying their luck at catching a rainbow trout or largemouth bass as stocked by Genoa National Fish Hatchery. LaCrosse FRO also assisted with Fishing Day events at the Upper Mississippi, Minnesota Valley and Necedah NWR's. Hundreds of kids and adults participated in these events which help improve fishing skills and knowledge the aquatic world. Partners include: Upper Mississippi NW&FR-Winona District, Genoa National Fish Hatchery, Tomah Veterans Administration Hospital, American Legion of Wisconsin and Tomah Middle School. 5/19/99

### **Students Plant Trees on Trempealeau NWR**

*Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge*

Trempealeau NWR partnered with University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and the National Tree Trust to provide a service/learning project for 15 students. The students learned about the refuge system and mission and the management and public use Programs occurring at the refuge. In exchange, the students planted 600 tree seedlings provided by the National Tree Trust and re-

moved tree tubes from trees planted in past years. Partners include: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and National Tree Trust. 5/30/99

### **Construction to Begin on Pool 6 EMP Project**

Upper Mississippi River *National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*  
A pre-construction conference for the Bank Stabilization, Stage 3, Pool 6 EMP Project was held on May 6, 1999. Work will begin in June and will be completed by the contractor, Weymiller Marine, in late September. This project will preserve, restore and enhance backwater fish and migratory bird habitat on the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR by maintaining existing island shoreline, reducing and eliminating flow through breaches in existing islands. The project will protect 60 acres of habitat, including one existing bald eagle nest. Partners include: Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 5/30/99

### **Necedah Hosts IMBD Activities**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*  
On May 8, the Necedah NWR hosted an open house for members of the community. Activities included an early morning bird identification hike, a slide presentation on cranes of the world, origami of migratory birds, and a demonstration on radio telemetry and information gathering on migratory species. The Friends of Necedah provided

refreshments. The Friends also had their regular monthly meeting on that day to plan their involvement in refuge activities for the next month. 5/30/99

### **IMBD Partnering Effort**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge- LaCrosse District*  
Several local organizations partnered to sponsor an International Migratory Bird Day at a local nature area. The event included birding hikes, coloring/tracing boards, Reebo the clown, live bird demonstrations, slide presentations on neotropical migrants, and drawings for kids and adults birding guides. Approximately 80 people attended the event. Partners include: Coulee Region Audubon Society, Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges, Hixon Forest Nature Center, La Crosse Lions Club, Upper Mississippi River Interpretive Association, La Crosse Premium Water 5/30/99

### **Reforestation to Reduce Habitat Fragmentation** *Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge*

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources provided 52,250 tree seedlings valued at \$23,500. Several volunteers helped plant the trees. This spring, 165,875 hardwood tree seedlings were planted by a contractor, volunteers, and Refuge staff on 46 sites totaling over 342 acres. After five seasons of planting, a total of 344,000 hardwood seedlings have been planted on 700 acres, completing Crab Orchard NWR's five-year resto-

ration project to reduce forest habitat fragmentation. Many small (1 to 25 acres) openings within the forest were selected for reforestation to create larger, contiguous blocks of forest habitat favored by neotropical migrant songbirds and other wildlife species. A wide variety of hard mast producing species was planted to reestablish a biologically diverse forest community. 5/30/99

### **Tree Planting Day a Success**

*Upper Mississippi Refuge-LaCrosse District*  
On Friday, May 14, 108 second graders and 26 high school students from LaCrescent-Hokah Elementary/High School assisted the Upper Miss - La Crosse and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in planting 550 saplings on a 1/4 mile section of old Highway 16. That section was removed last fall as part of the City of La Crescent's Shore Acres Road Improvement Project. The restored area and adjoining wetlands (about 5 acres) will become part of the Refuge through a land exchange between the City and the Service. The kids were quoted as saying "the best day of second grade!" The event was covered by two television stations and two newspapers. 5/30/99

### **Challenge Cost Share Program Benefits Bobolinks!**

*Wisconsin Private Lands Office*

Through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, 40 acres of tallgrass prairie and oak savanna are being restored on

private land. Management activities include clearing brush, removal of tree rows that serve as predator travel corridors, prescribed burning, and prairie establishment. Connecting native habitats with surrogate grasslands, i.e. alfalfa hay, and delaying harvest of these surrogate grasslands provides quality nesting habitat for rare and declining grassland bird species. A recent site visit found at least 12 male bobolinks establishing breeding territories throughout the grassland complex.

5/30/99

### **Necedah Visits High School Wildlife Class**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On May 17, 1999, Refuge staffer Jennifer Rabuck visited Mauston High School's Wildlife Class. The 40 students and two teachers viewed a slide presentation and participated in a discussion on the world's crane species. Talk centered on threats to the cranes, habitat restoration efforts, basic biology and release programs for cranes. Students also examined the potential release of whooping cranes in Wisconsin and the issues surrounding such a release.

5/30/99

### **Necedah NWR Selected to Sponsor Conservation Crew**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR has again been selected as a work site sponsor for a Wisconsin Conservation Corp crew for one year beginning July 6, 1999. This is a job training program for young adults and will consist of four

crew members and a crew leader. The crew will be completing surveys, banding waterfowl, constructing visitor facilities, setting up timber harvests, and clearing fire-breaks. The refuge is joined this year by five other local land management organization in the sponsorship. The crew labor is valued at over \$88,000. Partners include: Wisconsin Conservation Corps Board, Outdoors Forever, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 5/30/99

### **Horicon Refuge Staff Produces Newsletter**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff produced and distributed the 1999 edition of the "Redhead Gazette" to 700 outlets in Partnership with the Midwest Interpretive Association, Kaestner Design Studio, volunteer Sarah Congdon, and Fond du Lac Senior Center volunteers. The 12-page publication sports a new, refreshing look and includes photos because of Sarah's creative, talented design work. Articles were written by various employees on newsworthy subjects. Partners include: Midwest Interpretive Association, Kaestner Design Studio, volunteer Sarah Congdon and Fond du Lac Senior Center. 5/30/99

### **Horicon Marsh Bird Festival Takes Flight**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Horicon NWR helped sponsor the Horicon Marsh Bird Festival, May 7-9, 1999, in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day. The refuge spon-

sored a reception for local K-12 winners of the Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Stamp contest. Seventy people enjoyed Tim Eisele's slide show called "Ding's Darling" and a free drawing for prizes including a signed and numbered Jim Hautman print of his 1996 winning federal duck stamp. One of Horicon Marsh's very own claimed Wisconsin's best in show prize this year, Dan Koepsell of neighboring Waupun. The refuge also hosted "Wild Things!" wildlife activities for kids of all ages at the rustic Environmental Education Barn. With a focus on birds, youth dissected owl pellets, borrowed binoculars for guided bird hikes, enjoyed a marsh scavenger hunt. Other highlights during this march event included guided hikes, tours, field trips, demonstrations, talks, exhibits, and art displays. Approximately 132 species of birds were identified and about 2,000 people attended. 5/30/99

### **Horicon NWR Hosts Fishing Clinic**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

In early celebration of National Fishing Week, Horicon NWR hosted a fishing clinic May 25, 1999, for more than 100 students, parents and teachers from Belle Reynolds Elementary School Oakfield, Wis., and 15 students with learning or emotional disabilities Washington Elementary School, Beaver Dam, Wis. The groups enjoyed 10 Pathways to Fishing learning stations at the visitor center in the morning and fishing at three different marsh sites in the afternoon.

Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Woods and Water Taxidermy, Leopold Wetland Management District, Beaver Dam Charter School, and several individual refuge volunteers. 5/30/99

**Necedah Hosts Whooper Re-Introduction Meeting**  
*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On May 20, Wisconsin residents had an opportunity to provide comments and ask questions on the potential whooping crane release at one of three proposed sites, the Necedah NWR/Meadow Valley State Wildlife Area. The meeting included displays provided by the DNR, Necedah Refuge, Friends of Necedah, and the International Crane Foundation. Local school children had colored pictures of whooping cranes and their footprints. A costumed crane parent mingled among the crowd and a local craftsman twisted balloons into crane hats. Dr. John Cannon presented a slide show on the recovery effort and gathered input via written survey forms on what the residents felt about the potential release site. Ninety-eight people including a congressional aid from Senator Feingold's office, two radio and three newspaper reporters, and 19 support staff from the presenting agencies were at the Necedah School during the evening. 5/30/99

**Night Investigation Hike Held At Necedah**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On May 20, Necedah hosted its first night hike of the season. Fourteen people attended the event and learned how to enhance their perception in the darkness. Students examined their everyday use of their senses and were provided an opportunity to imitate nocturnal animals in an attempt to understand these elusive creatures better. The goal of the hike was to help put people at ease with the darkness while enabling them to understand that their senses are quite capable of helping them to be secure in the night. 5/30/99

**Lake Odessa Cabin Owners Unhappy With Water Levels**

*Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge-Wapello District*

Representatives from the Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Odessa cabin owners, hunters, and fishermen met in a public meeting in Wapello, Iowa, concerning water levels in Lake Odessa. Cabin owners want the levels high for their summer boating and fishing activities, government personnel and hunters want to lower water levels as soon as the river will allow to mimic the way the river was without the locks and dams. This would provide moist soil vegetative development in preparation for the fall migration. Nearly 200 individuals attended the three-hour meeting. 5/30/99

**Service Exhibits at Homeschool Conference**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff set up and staffed a display at the 16th Annual Wisconsin Parents Association Home School Conference and Curriculum Fair. First to third place finishers in the from the 1999 Wisconsin Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest was the focal point of the display. Over 700 copies of the Junior Duck Stamp Program booklet were distributed, including the ones requested by WPA for distributing at their upcoming district meetings. About 800 people had registered for the event. About 80 families signed up on the refuge offerings mailing list. The space cost was covered by the Washington Federal Duck Stamp Office, while the refuge covered salaries and transportation costs. The goal for this endeavor was to create an awareness in home school families of the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program and the Necedah NWR. 5/30/99

**Necedah Refuge Trails Get Improvements**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff completed installing new trailhead signs on the three refuge trails May 8, 1999. New additions include sign-in boxes, comment sections, individual trail brochures with interpretive information, and other appropriate signs. Visitors have already commented on the benefits of the changes. Additionally, Lupine Loop trailhead was revamped to provide an accessible pathway around a gate. 5/30/99



### **Eaglets Placed in Artificial Nest**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-McGregor District*

Storms blew down one of the 50 active eagle nests in the McGregor District, stranding two eaglets on the downed tree due to high water. Based on continued parental care of the chicks, District staff decided to construct a new nest in a nearby tree. One chick that had a broken wing underwent surgery at the Raptor Center in the Twin Cities and will likely be returned to the nest within the week. The other chick is healthy and being attended by the adults. A local news release covered the rescue. 5/30/99

### **Necedah Staff Readies Volunteer Housing**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

A setup of a mobile home acquired through the Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) was completed by the end of May 1999. The home provides volunteers and interns a place to stay during their volunteer period at Necedah NWR. Refuge staff and Wisconsin Conservation Corp members poured 18 yards of concrete for a slab to anchor the three-bedroom trailer the Refuge received from FEMA. Utilities were also run from the annex building and connected along with metal skirting, a deck and two sets of steps. Local contractors connected electricity and LP gas. This project was started in mid-1998. Future plans are to construct a roof over the

trailer and add-on a screen porch to accommodate volunteers. 5/30/99

### **New Fishery Biologists Increase Reach of Carterville FRO**

*Carterville Fishery Resources Office*

The Carterville Fishery Resources Office added two new fishery biologists in Fiscal Year 1999 to strengthen its biological staff. Chad Stinson joined the staff March 21, 1999, for a one year term. Greg Conover joined the FRO staff June 6, 1999, as a permanent employee. The addition of two fishery biologists to the Carterville FRO staff improves the staff's capability to be actively involved in the management of the regions aquatic resources. Chad Stinson is working on a biological assessment of the Kankakee River drainage, a pallid sturgeon survey on the lower Ohio River, and SIKES Act fishery management activities. Greg Conover manages the MICRA National Paddlefish Database and Coded-Wire Tag Processing Center, conducts inspections for the Service's Triploid Grass carp Inspection/Certification Program, and conducts fishery management activities on waters owned by the Department of Defense. 6/6/99

### **Partnership Helps Hire Intern at Leopold Wetland Management District**

*Leopold Wetland Management District*

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, administered by the Leopold Wetland Management District, (WMD) hired

a summer intern through a cooperative partnership with Wings Over Wisconsin, a statewide conservation group. Amanda Schrank, a senior at University of Wisconsin-River Falls, will graduate in December with a Biology major and Conservation minor. Amanda assisted the District with many activities, including the restoration of 33 acres of Earner Blue grassland habitat and 13 acres of prairie grass restoration. Amanda was an intern with Horicon NWR during the summer of 1998. 6/7/99

### **New Water Control System Saves Nesting Habitat at Horicon NWR**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Enhancements to Main Pool wetlands were completed in June at the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. A new water control system was added to the 11,565 acre main pool. The new system includes five 42-inch culverts underneath the main dike road and constructing 13 stoplog structures. Before completion of this project, all water from the Horicon Refuge flowed through a 6'x14' radial gate. Major fluctuations in water levels occurred after rain events, destroying most, if not all, of the nests within the wetland. Now, the water can go over the new stoplog structures as the water level increases. The reduced fluctuation in water levels should decrease the number of nests previously lost to rapidly changing water levels. Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited. 6/15/99

### **Joliet, Illinois Professor Pays Fine For Violations of Migratory Bird Treaty Act**

#### *Chicago Law Enforcement*

A Joliet, Ill., taxidermist, and college professor convicted in 1986 of unlawfully possessing migratory birds and performing taxidermy services on federally protected migratory birds without a permit has again been fined for violating wildlife laws. William Zales, a professor at Joliet Junior College, paid a \$400 fine in June in lieu of appearing in federal court to answer charges of unlawfully transporting a federally-protected Red Tail Hawk carcass which had been unlawfully received. The matter was initially investigated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and referred to Service Law Enforcement for prosecution. When asked why he did not comply with the permit requirements, Zales simply said, "Screw the permits." 6/19/99

### **White Pelicans Banded on Upper Mississippi River Refuge**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Biologists from Upper Mississippi River NW&FR have teamed up with Dr. Al Grewe, St. Cloud State University, in the capture, banding, and color-marking of American white pelicans in western MN. Dr. Grewe has banded nearly 40,000 young pelicans over a 20+ year period. Eric Nelson, Refuge Biologist and his wife, accompanied Dr. Grewe's crew to Marsh Lake, Lac Qui Parle County, on June 19, 1999 and attached patagial wing tags on

198 of 2,000 young pelicans banded. The flightless young are hatched and raised on an isolated island in Marsh Lake. Adult pelicans are using the Refuge in increasing numbers. The summer occurrence of non-breeding American white pelicans on the Refuge is a rather recent phenomenon, since the 1980's the "summer" population on the River has reached nearly 1,500 birds. The natal origin of these birds is not known, but some of these birds probably were raised in western Minnesota at Marsh Lake. The Refuge is conducting a three-year project studying the number and distribution of white pelicans using the Refuge. This study will be greatly enhanced with the ability to identify individual birds. It is quite likely that white pelicans could begin nesting on Refuge islands during the next few years. Pelicans could soon receive public scrutiny as fish eaters similar to that of the double-crest cormorant here in the Great Lakes Region. Also, documentation of white pelican use of the river will enhance our ability to address pelican issues as they develop. Partners include: St. Cloud State University Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Area Wildlife Office. 6/19/99

### **Cooperation, Education Help Save Protected Bank Swallow Colony in Suburban Chicago**

#### *Chicago Law Enforcement*

A call from a Thron Creek Audobon Society member to the Service's Chicago Law Enforcement Office resulted in the preservation of a colony of

about 250 bank swallows nesting in a dirt pile belonging to a landscape supply company in suburban Chicago, Ill. The Audobon member advised Special Agent Joe Budzyn of the nesting colony and the potential for destruction of the mound by the supply firm. The landscape company was informed of the nesting swallows, and advised of its protected status, and nesting and migration characteristics. The company's manager said the swallows had colonized in the mounds in previous years and that he was unaware of the swallow's protected status. The manager said he could work around the nesting colony and agreed to leave the mounds undisturbed until the colony migrated. The cooperation of all parties was covered in several local newspapers and Chicago Wilderness magazine.

Partners include: Audobon Society, Thorn Creek Chapter (Mary Hahn) and Witvoet & Co. Excavating. 6/23/99

### **Upper Mississippi Refuge's Hunters Point Landing Get New Surface**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

A busy boat landing used to gain access to the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge was resurfaced June 29, 1999, through a partnership with the Refuge and LaCrosse County Highway Department. Hunters Point Landing is a heavily used landing used by boaters and canoeists to gain access to the

Refuge and the Refuge's canoe trail. The landing is managed by the LaCrosse County Park Department, the Refuge maintains a kiosk and notice board at the landing. The access road to the landing traverses a Refuge "No Hunting Zone." The LaCrosse County Highway Department provided the labor and equipment to re-surface the access road, landing and two ramps with recycled materials. Service funds were used to purchase materials. The highway department will provide the long-term maintenance of the landing. Partners include: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge-La Crosse District and LaCrosse, Wis., County Highway Department. 6/29/99

### **Chicago Field Office Contributes to Biodiversity Recovery Plan**

Chicago Field Office  
The Chicago Field Office has worked extensively in the development of a draft Regional Biodiversity Recovery Plan prepared by Chicago Wilderness, a coalition of about 90 agencies and organizations. Staff attended several meetings which provided direction that was used to develop the first draft, and staff prepared some sections of the plan. We prepared detailed comments on a first draft, and these comments were incorporated into a public review draft. We continue to work with various partners to implement the plan. This effort represents the first known attempt by an urban area to develop a plan to preserve and restore the native biodiversity for an

entire region. 6/30/99

### **St. Croix River Zebra Mussel Monitoring Results**

*LaCrosse Fishery Resources  
Office*

The first zebra mussel monitoring dives of the season were conducted last week with over 750 boats examined and several fixed surface sites. The exotic was only found on two boats, both had been on the moored on the Mississippi River earlier in the year. Zebra mussels have been at the door step of the St. Croix River for several years but have yet developed a reproducing population within the waterway. Last week a crew of divers led by Byron Karns (NPS) and Scott Yess (FWS) searched for zebra mussels from Stillwater to Prescott. Nearly 800 boats, three mussel beds and several fixed material sites were examined. The exotic was found on only two boats that had been previously moored on the Mississippi River. Partners include: National Park Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Army Corps of Engineers, Northern States Power, U.S. Coast Guard and Minnesota and Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission. 6/30/99

### **Service, Partners Plan Cleanup of Contaminated Sites at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie**

*Chicago Field Office*

The Chicago Field Office participates on two workgroups focusing on the contaminant issues at the

Midewin National Tall grass Prairie, formerly the U.S. Army's Joliet Arsenal. For years, the Army manufactured explosives and other munitions on the site. As a result, much of this site is contaminated with the chemicals used in manufacturing explosives. Other portions of the site were used for agricultural purposes. On November 4, 1998, the Army, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency signed a record of decision for the soil and ground water contaminants at this site. The record of decision did not establish clean-up levels for soil. The record of decision provided for the establishment of soil clean-up levels by work groups consisting of members from State and Federal agencies. The Service collaborates on the ecological work and management groups to ensure that trustee resources are adequately considered and that clean up levels will be protective of the environment. We have established good working relationships with several partners in this effort. The clean up levels should be established sometime next spring. Partners include: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Army, Army Corps of Engineers; Illinois EPA and DNR; citizens groups and consultants. 6/30/99

### **Wisconsin Federal Jr. Duck Stamp Best of Show Honored Necedah National Wildlife Refuge**

Refuge staff and Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA) Board Member Jeff Bord

presented recognition awards to Dan Koepsell for his Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Stamp Best of Show artwork during the Awards Night at Waupun High School. About 150 people were in attendance. On June 1, Dan Koepsell, Waupun, Wis., was recognized for winning Best of Show in the Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Stamp Art judging. Koepsell received a framed photo enlargement of his winning artwork and a limited edition print of a federal duck stamp. About 150 people attended. 6/30/99

### **Necedah NWR Opens Trails as Part of National Trails Day**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR opened a portion of its refuge not normally available to visitors in observance of National Trails Day. Staff were available to answer questions, provide maps and suggest wildlife viewing spots. Twenty-four visitors stopped into the office for information, while others simply enjoyed the "open" refuge. The office was open and staffed to orient visitors and provide them with maps and information. 6/30/99

### **Annual National Fishing Day a Huge Success**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge held its ninth annual National Fishing Day event June 5, 1999 in Winona, Minn.

Headquarters and Winona District coordinate the event with help from the La Crosse Fishery Resources Office, the

Regional Sign Center and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. Sixty children, ages 6 through 12, arrived before 8 a.m. looking forward to a day of fun and fishing. Half the kids fished at a local trout pond, sponsored by Trout Unlimited and half fished the Mississippi river backwaters from boats with experienced anglers. A group of 30 adults with disabilities participated in our Fishing Day. We provide a large, handicapped accessible pontoon, which remains docked at shore, with volunteers to assist and make the day a fun and enriching experience for everyone.

The participants enjoy this annual event immensely and look forward to it every year. At noon we serve a hot lunch provided by the Friends of the Upper Miss. This event provides a worthwhile experience for youth and people with disabilities in the local community.

For many, this day provides the only opportunity for fishing or experiencing the Mississippi River. It also provides the opportunity to expand good public relations between the Service, our many Partners and the community.

Partners include: Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges, Winona County Sheriff and Deputies, Winona County Dive and Rescue Team, Trout Unlimited, St. Mary's University, Winona Sportsmen Club, Coca-Cola Company, Tom Thompson-County Market, Winona County Community Education, La Crosse Fishery Resource Office, Upper Mississippi River NWFR Winona District Regional Sign Center

and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. 6/30/99

### **Angling for Fun at Necedah NWR**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Necedah NWR hosted its second annual "Angling for Fun" celebration honoring National Fishing Day June 12, 1999. Activities included a casting contest for kids, open fishing on Goose Pool, complimentary lunch, adult seminars, and a look into fisheries research techniques. Additionally, visitors were able to learn *gyotaku*, the Japanese art of fish printing. Six area sporting goods shops donated contest prizes and door prizes. 46 people attended the event. An area radio station interviewed staff and aired the Angling for Fun information throughout the day. 6/30/99

### **Upper Mississippi Boat Landing Maintenance**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Approximately 400 cubic yards of sand were dredged from the Lower I-90 landing, two rock groins were created and 10 cubic yards of gravel were added to a shoreline fishing area to increase access. The Lower I-90 Boat Landing received significant maintenance during the first week of June. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was contracted to dredge approximately 400 cubic yards of sand from the ramp and dock area at the landing. Six 100-ton rock rip rap was used to create two



rock groins to reduce sand movement in the bay, and also provide additional protection to the main channel shoreline. An additional 10 cu. yards of gravel was placed in the rip rap to provide access to the shoreline for fishing. The wheelchair accessible transfer dock also received a new anchoring system that hopefully will withstand the rigors of shifting ice flows. Funding for this \$15,000 project was provided through the remaining 1997 flood fund. 6/30/99

### **Night Hike Held at Necedah NWR**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Community members participated in guided night hike and presentation. Forty-one participants had the opportunity to use their senses in a night-time setting and compare nocturnal adaptations to those of diurnal creatures. Activities included an in depth look at human eyesight, hearing and sense of smell as compared to the animals that are active at night. Participants topped off the hike with a solo experience, spending time alone in the night with their newly acquired confidence. The group included a cub scout troop from Tomah, and citizens from as far away as Madison. 6/30/99

### **Master's Program Teachers Visit Necedah**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

A group of 13 teachers in a Master's Degree program attended a field trip of the savanna restoration sites on the Necedah NWR June 25. Refuge staff led the group of

secondary education teachers to various spots on the refuge showing the stages of savanna restoration. The group was able to see savanna birds and endangered Eastern blue butterfly chrysalis. 6/30/99

### **Osprey Hatch at Necedah NWR, First in 25 Years**

*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On June 18, Bio Tech Olson observed two osprey nestlings moving about in the nest located on the Rattail Ditch in the Sprague Mather Flowage. This is the first successful osprey nesting activity in over 25 years. 6/30/99

### **Eighth Annual Family Fishing Fair**

*Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge - Brussels District*

Youngsters from seven Illinois counties and seven states attended the eighth annual Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair in Pere Marquette State Park. Designed to introduce and promote fishing as a family-oriented pastime, the fair had eight hands-on stations designed to teach the basics of fishing. Subjects such as knot tying, fish identification, casting, and equipment were demonstrated by Service and Illinois Department of Natural Resources personnel as well as 76 volunteers. Seven hundred and fifty youngsters registered and visited each station. 6/30/99

### **Iowa River Partnership Celebrates Wetland Restoration Milestone**

*Mark Twain NWR- Wapello District*

Partners who banded together to establish the Iowa River Corridor Project were honored at the Wetland Conservation Milestone Celebration June 30, 1999, in Amana, Iowa. Guests included representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey, landowners, community leaders, and members of the Corridor nonprofit organization. The event celebrated the six years of hard work and resource successes following the 1993 floods; resulting in the establishment of 12,000 acres of floodplain easements and 10,000 acres of acquired land under the National Wildlife Refuge System within the 50,000-acre Iowa Corridor Project Area. Staff from offices of Senator Charles Grassley and Congressman Jim Nussle also attended. 6/30/99

### **Leafy Spurge Attack Continues at Trempealeau NWR**

*Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge*

Approximately 71,500 leafy spurge beetles were collected from insectories on Trempealeau NWR allowing establishment of 16 new spurge control sites on the Refuge and 19 sites in other locations in Wisconsin. Crews from LaCrosse District, Fort McCoy Military Reserve, and Wisconsin Department of Highways helped collect the beetles and released them in

their respective areas. Refuge volunteers and other staff assisted with collection and sorting and site establishment on-refuge. 6/30/99

### **Upper Mississippi Refuge Provides Work Site for PIC Kids**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Throughout the summer, six "at-risk" high school students and one crew leader from the Western Wisconsin Private Industry Councils' (PIC) Summer Youth Program volunteered on projects on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge-LaCrosse District and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The PIC crew worked on removing fence cleaning boat landings removing leafy spurge sampled wild celery signed boundaries and helped with maintenance projects. The crew contributed nearly 550 hours during the summer. Partners include: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Western Wisconsin Private Industry Council. 6/30/99

### **Heavy Public Use Precipitates Added Enforcement on Winona District**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-Winona District*

Increased public use during the summer months have prompted Refuge staff to increase its law enforcement presence on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Non-enforcement staff were called upon to provide Service

presence on the Refuge, providing regular weekend patrols, particularly on the Winona District. The increased presence has resulted in numerous contacts with Refuge visitors. Upper Miss. Refuge experiences tremendous numbers of visitors during summer weekends. Public use activities include boating and related water sports, fishing, and camping on Refuge islands, sandbars, and beaches. Partners include the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office. 7/1/99

### **President Clinton Announces Proposal to Delist Bald Eagle External Affairs**

In a White House ceremony July 2, 1999, President Bill Clinton announced the Service's proposal to delist the Bald Eagle in the year 2000, barring any new information that would alter the proposal. The event was held on the White House South Lawn, and attended by approximately 150 invited guests. Remarks from Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt and a young leader from the Anacostia (Va.) Conservation Corps preceded the President's speech. Bald Eagle Recovery Coordinator Jody Millar was also on stage. A live eagle from the Foundation to Protect America's Eagles and an American flag provided the backdrop. Media interviews were conducted both before and after the event, in Washington and on the South Lawn. Many key players in the bald eagle's recovery were present, including the Service's Recovery Team members from throughout the country. External Affairs staff from Region 3 and

the Washington Office provided support, media materials (video, photographs, web site information, etc) and coordinated interviews with national and White House press corps prior to and on the day of the event. 7/2/99

### **Chautauqua NWR Habitat Project Dedicated**

*Illinois River NW&FR*

Congressman Ray LaHood was the key note speaker at the dedication ceremony held July 7, 1999, for the Lake Chautauqua Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project. The 100 guests also heard comments from Assistant Regional Director John Blankenship, Colonel Mudd commander of the Rock Island District, Corps of Engineers and Marvin Hubbel of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Following the unveiling of a dedication sign, guests had the opportunity to learn more about the project and the refuge from specialists from the Corps of Engineers and Fish and Wildlife Service Personnel stationed at various points of interest within the project. Partners include: U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District. 7/7/99

### **Two-Day Girl Scout Day Camp at Necedah NWR** *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

The Woodland Council of Girl Scouts joined with Refuge staff to host a day camp for about 51 girl scouts on Necedah NWR July 7-8, 1999. This was the first year that the refuge was the site for this activity. An

orientation/teacher workshop was held at the refuge for the scout leaders on 7/1. Refuge Volunteer and Friends member Ruth Kies served as Camp Director. Camp activities included orienteering, bird-house making, fishing, a plant scavenger hunt canoeing environmental games and making plaster casts of a wolf print. Refuge staff also escorted the Scouts on a hike through the refuge. During the hike they learned about radio-telemetry. Several tracking activities, including actually collaring one of the girls so the others could track her made the learning more fun. Jody Kibler, a reporter from the Star Times newspaper visited the camp July 8, and produced a feature story on the event for the paper's July 14 issue. The Woodland Council includes girl scouts from portions of nine Wisconsin counties. 7/8/99

### **Necedah NWR Staffs Booth at Fair**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff manned an information booth highlighting Necedah NWR, its activities and events during the Monroe County Fair at Tomah, Wis., July 7-11, 1999. The booth was staffed from noon to 10 p.m. daily. Over a thousand people toured the building that housed the Refuge display. Refuge staff talked with over 500 visitors, distributed leaflets and brochures, and added another 150 names to the refuge mailing list. Local radio station WBOG interviewed Refuge staff about Refuge programs. 7/11/99

### **Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid Recovery**

#### *Leopold Wetland Management District*

While listed federally as "threatened," the eastern prairie fringed orchid (EPFO) is listed as an endangered species in Wisconsin. Surveys conducted by Leopold Wetland Management District (WMD) staff and Garden Club of America volunteers, recently discovered 76 new EPFO plants at the Uihlein Waterfowl Production Area. Fourteen plants were discovered there last year, bringing the total EBFO population to 90 plants. 7/12/99

### **50 Acres of Prairie Restored at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

About 50 acres on the former Stensaas tract of the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge were planted to native grasses and forbs this summer, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Leopold Wetland Management District. This land had been cooperatively farmed since the Refuge purchased it, with several acres taken out of production each year and planted to native prairie. The last of the remaining farmland was planted this summer. Partners in the project included the Wisconsin DNR and Leopold WMD. 7/15/99

### **Wisconsin Man Indicted For Lacey Act Violations**

#### *Madison Law Enforcement*

A federal grand jury in Madison, Wis., returned a three-count indictment July 15,

1999, against Clyde H. Masten III, for violations of state and federal wildlife laws. Masten, of Portage, Wis., was charged with making false statements to Service special agents, a felony; and two misdemeanor violations of the Lacey Act for illegally taking, possessing and transporting white-tailed deer across state borders in violation of Wisconsin law and the Lacey Act. A trial date was not scheduled. The investigation was a joint effort involving Service law enforcement agents, and agents from Wisconsin and Michigan Departments of Natural Resources and the Service's Leopold Wetland Management District. 7/15/99

### **Discretionary Authority over Selected Wetlands in**

#### **McHenry County, Illinois**

#### *Chicago Field Office*

The Chicago Field Office played a leadership role in the McHenry County Advance Identification (ADID) study including authorship of part of the final report. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District and USEPA Region 5 published a joint public notice July 15, 1999, announcing exertion of discretionary authority over selected wetlands and waters in McHenry County, Ill. This means that the nationwide permit program does not apply to these selected wetlands and waters identified through the McHenry County ADID study. This represents the culmination of a two year study that identified those wetlands and waters of highest quality and functions in the county, that are not likely to receive permits for filling or

modification. The final study results are published on a user-friendly CD-Rom. Building upon the final report partially authored by the Service's Chicago Field Office, the joint public notice revokes the nationwide permits for the wetlands designated as high quality or high functional value in the ADID study. This enables a more rigorous review for any impacts proposed to these wetlands and waters identified through field work as the highest quality in the county using standardized methodology. The study results and maps published on CD-ROM enable any user to identify the locations of these highest quality aquatic resources and plan accordingly. The maps will also serve as an important tool in land planning, public land acquisition, and wetland restoration activities in McHenry County, Ill. Partners include: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District, McHenry County Conservation District, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and many more. 7/15/99

**Refuge Upgrades Lift Stations at Recreation Areas**  
*Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge*

The Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge began upgrading lift stations at the Crab Orchard and Little Grassy Campground in April. The contractor, L. Simmons Construction Inc. of Prairie Du

Rocher, Ill., began by replacing 1960's era equipment at two of the Refuge's campgrounds. Other work included replacing four sewage pumps, pump guide rails and pump lifting chains, electrical components and floats. A new ladder and steel cover were replaced at the Crab orchard campground. Work was completed on July 16, 1999. This project was funded by the Recreation Demonstration Fee Program and improves infrastructure in the recreation areas while improving facilities to Service standards. 7/16/99

**First Annual Wild Berry Bash at Necedah NWR**  
*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

More than 135 visitors participated in the 1st Annual Wild Berry Bash held at the Necedah NWR. July 17, 1999. Activities included a discussion and tour on berries and wildlife, a cooking contest, tie-dying with natural dyes, a pie-eating contest and a scavenger hunt. The visitors were also treated to the appearance of "Barry Berry" played by John Arciszewski, a Friends group member, who handed out blueberry balloons to young and old during the day-long event. The Friends of Necedah assisted refuge staff and provided prizes and ribbons for the event. 7/17/99

**Upper Mississippi Refuges Coordinate Law Enforcement Programs**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Refuge headquarters staff completed a series of coordination meetings with county sheriffs from Minnesota and Wisconsin that cover the Winona District and Trempealeau NWR. Refuge staff provided background information regarding the Service's Refuge law enforcement program, discussed interagency coordination and interagency cooperation. Radio communication agreements were executed or updated that will provide Refuge officers direct communications with area law enforcement centers. Partners include: Buffalo County Sheriff's Office, Alma Wis., Trempealeau County Sheriff's Office, Whitehall, Wis., Wabasha County Sheriff's Office, Wabasha, Minn., Winona County Sheriff's Office, Winona, Minn. 7/19/99

**Accomplishment Reporting System Enters Beta Test Period**

*External Affairs*

External Affairs staff began Beta testing of the Phase III Upgrade to the Region's Accomplishment Reporting System July 20, 1999. Testing of the reporting systems numerous features follows months of development by External Affairs and the developer, Minnesota Computer Programming, Inc.. Testing of should be



completed by July 30. The system's improvements include key word search capabilities, report archiving and an improved fax-email capability. The Accomplishment reporting system is an internet-based information gathering and dissemination system that allows Service field organizations to report initiatives and accomplishments. Noteworthy accomplishments are then shared with members of Congress, the news media and Service employees. Following testing at Region 3, the improved ARS will be made available to all Service Regions in the United States. Training for new Regional system managers is scheduled for late August. Partners include: Minnesota Computer Programming, Inc. 7/20/99

#### **LaCrosse FRO Staff Surveys Fish at Trempealeau NWR**

##### *LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office*

Staff from LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office conducted a week-long fishery survey on Trempealeau NWR in July in an effort to determine the impact of the Refuge's Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project. This is a multi-year evaluation which was initiated by LaCrosse FRO in 1992. During the study there has been slight shifts in abundance of various species however the dominant species (bullhead, carp, perch and northern pike) hasn't changed. This survey will provide valuable insight as to how future management of the fishery at Trempealeau should proceed and if the habitat manipulations can benefit fisheries. Partners

include: Wisconsin Conservation Corps, Minnesota Conservation Corps and Refuge volunteers. 7/22/99

#### **Chicago Field Office Projects Encourage Biodiversity for Backyards**

##### *Chicago Field Office*

Three habitat projects recently completed with the support of the Service's Chicago Field Office will help urban/suburban landowners better appreciate native landscapes and incorporate these features into their own yards. A one-acre natural habitat garden has been created at the City of Chicago's North Park Village Nature Center. The site accessible to persons with disabilities and consists of examples of native prairie, savanna, woodland, and wetland habitats of Illinois. The entrance garden is designed with interpretive signage to familiarize the Center's 60,000 annual visitors with the native habitats of Illinois and promote the use of native plantings in urban settings. The Conservation Foundation teamed with 125 fourth graders from Kingsley elementary school to plan and plant a butterfly garden at the Foundation's headquarters in Naperville, Ill. The students (with a little help) researched butterflies and plants to design the garden and in June came out to help plant it. The garden and native landscaping around the office will be used for educating homeowners in the Naperville area on the aesthetics and benefits of using native plants. In early June, more than 20 volunteers, including local garden club members and cub scouts, helped plant a four-

acre prairie on the Frankfort Public Library property. The prairie landscape was designed, planted and funded by volunteers. The goal was to establish "a little bit of prairie in the prairie state." A winding path along the edge will allow patrons and school groups to view the prairie throughout the seasons and use the site for educational purposes and as a link to the areas natural history. Partners include: The Conservation Fund, City of Chicago, The Conservation Foundation, Village of Frankfort Public Library, local garden club, and the Illinois DNR. 7/27/99

#### **Waubonsie Creek Dam Removed, Habitat Improved**

##### *Chicago Field Office*

In July 1996, Waubonsie Creek, a tributary of the Lower Fox River, was inundated by record floods causing the Stonegate dam in Oswego, Ill., to fail over approximately 50 percent of its length. Rather than rebuild the dam, the Oswegoland Park District took an innovative approach and chose to restore this stretch of the Creek to a more natural condition. The project involved modifying the remainder of the dam, converting it to a riffle structure. Two additional riffle structures were installed upstream of the dam to create better fish habitat and to facilitate fish passage over the next dam in the stream, promoting an improved fishery to greater area of the stream than is currently feasible. Since the dam failed, the creek corridor has reached an interim riverine-type equilibrium including wetland re-establish-

ment. These wetlands and some additional restored acreage will be enhanced through invasive species control and additional plantings. The stream itself will be improved with the installation of two additional riffles upstream of the first and installation of lunker structures along the cutting bank rather than traditional hardscape streambank stabilization.

This project will enhance one acre of existing wetland, restore one-half acre of new wetland, improve 820 linear feet of in-stream habitat with three riffle/pool structures, and enhance 200 linear feet of streambank with fish habitat (lunker) structures.

Wetland dependent migratory birds will benefit from this project as wetland habitat in the corridor is restored and enhanced and as the fishery improves providing additional food resources for these wetland associated species. The increased diversity in the system will benefit other species of wildlife as well including fish, aquatic macroinvertebrates, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Waubonsie Creek is a tributary to the Lower Fox River. The Creek is approximately 10.8 miles long with a watershed of roughly 29.6 square miles (18,950 acres).

The drainage basin is typical of a watershed under development. In November 1996, a watershed resource planning committee was formed to develop a watershed plan and recommendations to increase awareness of the creek, to reduce flooding, and to improve the quality of the creek. This

project is endorsed by this plan and will improve the biological resources in the stream. Partners include: Oswegoland Park District, U.S. Department of Agriculture-NRCS and Illinois DNR. 7/30/99

### **More Than 300 Canada Geese Banded Through Partnership** *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, in Partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and others, banded 313 Canada geese; 42 of these were also neck banded. Twenty nine volunteers contributed 174 hours toward this effort. On July 1, 1999, fifty persons gathered at Trempealeau NWR to band over 300 geese after herding them into a pen with a flotilla of seventeen canoes. Forty two of the geese were also neck banded. Wisconsin DNR organized the banding operation while Trempealeau NWR gathered volunteers to help with the process. In addition to Service and DNR staff, Wisconsin Conservation Corps, Minnesota Conservation Corps, the Private Industry Council work crew, and Wisconsin Waterfowl Association participated. 7/30/99

### **Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff and local community members were invited guests for a celebration of the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ). SIDEZ is a grassroots opportunity for citizens, agencies and organizations to work together

to improve communities and quality of life within a three county area of the Cache River Watershed. Johnson, Alexander, and Pulaski counties were designated one of four Empowerment Zones in the country. During the celebration, county representatives highlighted seven goals for rural development (community pride, community development, education, health care, tourism, infrastructure and economic development) and elected officials signed a Memorandum of Agreement for a Rural Development Empowerment Grant. Refuge staff are working closely with county representatives and citizens to bring about positive change in an economically depressed area. Partners include: Southern 5 Planning, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Alexander/Pulaski/Johnson County Commission. 7/30/99

### **Refuge Officers Conduct Holiday Law Enforcement**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-McGregor District*  
One hundred miles of Refuge habitat protected by law enforcement patrols on the busiest public use weekend of the year. Three refuge officers from the McGregor District and one from the Winona headquarters office of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge patrolled the main channel of the Mississippi River July 3-4, 1999. Violations encountered were possession and discharge of fireworks, underage possession

sion of alcohol, and boating violations. The weather was extremely hot and this holiday weekend was the busiest in terms of public use ever seen on the Refuge. The majority of users were families out enjoying the weekend. 7/30/99

### **Necedah NWR Staffs Booth at Fair**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

The Service message reached well over 1,000 people through a Refuge display at the Monroe County Fair in Tomah, Wis., July 7-11, 1999. Over the five-day fair, Refuge staff talked with more than 500 people and an additional 150 names were added to the Refuge mailing list. Radio interviews were conducted by local radio station. The booth was staffed from noon to 10 p.m. daily. 7/30/99

### **Chicago Field Office Studies Mitigated Wetlands**

#### *Chicago Field Office*

In the Spring and Summer of 1999, the Chicago Field Office participated in a mitigation wetlands study with Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation (East Dundee, IL). The purpose of the study was to provide better information on wildlife use of mitigation wetlands in the Chicago region. The two-year study focuses on all wildlife (e.g., birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates) in mitigation and natural wetlands. Our efforts focused on the amphibians and reptiles (collectively called herps) in the study. Herp abundance and diversity information was obtained by the use of pitfall traps, turtle

traps and visual searches. By providing this information, an evaluation of the wildlife habitat value of mitigation wetlands in the Chicago region can be ascertained, and this information should help us design better quality wetlands in the future. Partners include: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. 7/31/99

### **Congressional Contacts and Tours Update Lawmakers on Region's Activities**

#### *External Affairs*

During the first eight months of Fiscal Year 1999, more than 500 congressional contacts were made with an average of 64 contacts per month. Congressional tours were provided in every state of the Region, new congressional members were welcomed, and Capitol Hill briefings were provided to the 114 congressional members' staff and 29 subcommittee staff. Congressional briefing books were developed for each of the states in the Region and the briefing books are now being used as the national prototype. The Region's internal congressional knowledge was emphasized and an intranet site was developed containing congressional office contact information that links to the congressional member's home page. 8/1/99

### **Horicon NWR 1999 Biological Program of Purple Loosestrife Successful**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

An estimated 48,000 *Galerucella* spp. beetles were reared and released this spring at six sites which included one

site on the State managed end of Horicon Marsh and one site on a Waterfowl Production Area for Leopold WMD. In addition to the successful rearing season, two of the original release sites showed significant damage to loosestrife by the end of summer. Most of the plants did not flower and large patches of loosestrife were brown or bare-stemmed. It is expected that these areas will have desirable plants regrowing and outcompeting the stressed loosestrife next year. These two release sites were only established in 1996. Horicon NWR has over 100 acres of purple loosestrife with hundreds of more acres in the refuge watershed overgrown with loosestrife. Biological control has been the only control measure that has provided lasting results and it has seen results after only four years. The goal of this program is not to eliminate purple loosestrife but to keep the plant in check so that desirable plants can compete with it and reduce the spread. Partners include: Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources and Cornell University. 8/1/99

### **Galerucella Insectories Started on Upper Mississippi Refuges**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Twenty thousand purple loosestrife biological control beetles (*Galerucella* spp.) were released August 1, 1999 on Trempealeau NWR in a cooperative effort to establish two field insectaries for future use

by the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The beetles were purchased for \$.25 each from Cornell University. This beetle broodstock should multiply into millions of beetles for future releases and save the Refuge a substantial amount of money in future beetle purchases. The protocol established by Dr. Bernd Blossey at Cornell University will be used to monitor the beetle populations at the two sites. Funds for purchase of the beetles were provided through a grant with the Friends of the Upper Mississippi Refuges and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Partners include: Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Refuge volunteers. 8/1/99

### **Illinois Urban Manual Updated; Promotes Protection of Urban Ecosystems**

*Chicago Field Office*

With help from the Service's Chicago Field Office, the first batch of updates to the "Illinois Urban Manual: A Technical Manual Designed for Urban Ecosystem Protection and Enhancement," have been published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The updates completed by the Statewide Community Assistance Committee are the first in a series of updates that will align the manual with best management practices (BMPs). The Chicago Field Office is a member of the statewide committee and has endeavored to take the lead in rewriting several standards that use

native vegetation and benefit wildlife. Seven standards, nine drawings and four introductory sections of the Illinois Urban Manual have been updated and published to date. When completed these standards will be adopted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Transportation for all permits and projects throughout Illinois.

Used throughout Illinois the standards will provide protection for natural resources through better water quality treatment buffers and erosion control as well as opportunities for better wildlife habitat through the use of BMPs and native vegetation.

Seven standards, nine drawings, and four introductory sections of the Illinois Urban Manual have been updated and published by the NRCS with technical input and assistance from the Service. When completed, these standards will be adopted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Transportation for all permits and projects throughout Illinois. The standards will also be used throughout Illinois to provide protection for natural resources through better water quality treatment, buffers, and erosion control, as well as, opportunities for better wildlife habitat through the use of BMPs and native vegetation.

8/2/99

### **Good News For Ducks: Wildcelery Continues to Increase on Upper Mississippi Refuge**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

On August 4, 1999, partners from the Service, U.S. Geological Survey and the Wisconsin DNR worked with volunteers to monitor the wildcelery (*Vallisneria americana*) in Lake Onalaska on the Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Five boats, equipped with at least four people, monitored 12 transects and 30 random points. Wild celery is an important food for migrating diving ducks especially the canvasback duck. Historically, Lake Onalaska has been almost completely covered with wildcelery and is a major stopover area for migrating canvasbacks. In 1980, a monitoring protocol was developed to quantify and record the average stems and percent presence of wildcelery in the Lake. Percent presence was well over 100 percent and averages of over 100 stems per square meter were found in the first five years of monitoring (1989-1984). Monitoring was not conducted during the years 1985-1988. After the drought in 1989 river biologists noticed a serious decline in the numbers of wildcelery plants throughout the Lake and the monitoring program was reinitiated. Between 1991 and 1996, average stem counts per square meter were less than 10 and percent presence was



less than 10 percent. In 1997 we started seeing a remarkable comeback in the shoreline margins of the Lake that weren't covered in the originally established transects but the transect data has started to reflect this observation as well. This year's monitoring showed an increase to 63 wildcelery plants per square meter and a 43 percent presence. Migrating canvasbacks returning to Lake Onalaska this year should have more wildcelery tubers to eat than they have seen in 10 years. Partners include: U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Refuge volunteers. 8/4/99

**Necedah Featured on Wisconsin Public Radio**  
*Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

Jean Ferraca from Wisconsin Public radio contacted Jennifer Rabuck at Necedah NWR about a recent article in Country Living magazine concerning berry picking at the refuge. Jean interviewed Rabuck and scheduled her as a guest on All About Food. 8/6/99

**Triploid Grasscarp Inspection/Certification Program Activities by CFRO**  
*Carterville Fishery Resources Office*

The Carterville Fishery Resources Office participates in the Service's Triploid Grasscarp Inspection/Certification Program, a service offered to natural resource agencies in the United States and other countries, to help state and others protect their natural resources. During Fiscal Year 1999, service

inspectors from Carterville FRO conducted 12 inspection for triploid grasscarp producers in Region 3. In all, 14,392 triploid grass carp were certified for 23 shipments into four states. Two inspections (17 percent) were failed by producers, supporting the need for the Service's involvement in this realm to protect our aquatic resources. The inspection program is to provide assurance to these agencies, and other concerned about protecting aquatic resources, that shipments of grasscarp alleged to be all triploid, do not, within the confidence limits of the inspection program, contain diploids. The CFRO provides inspection service to triploid grasscarp producers within Region 3. The Service's Triploid Grasscarp Inspection/Certification Program protects aquatic resources throughout Region 3 and other countries by preventing the unwanted spread of fertile aquatic nuisance species. 8/7/99

**Joint USGS/FWS Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force Staff Tour**  
*External Affairs*

Staff from the Service U.S. Geological Survey hosted a Mississippi River tour for Washington, D.C. congressional staff members of the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force on August 10-12, 1999. Lynh Nguyen, of Representative Evans (D-17th Ill.) staff, Ed Buckner, of Representative Kind's (D-3rd Wis.) staff, Amy Trotter, of Representative Leach's (R-1st Iowa) staff, Sam Willett, of Representative Gutknecht's (R-1st Minn.) staff,

and Ted Illston of the Northeast Midwest Institute joined the tour. During the afternoon of August 10, 1999, the staff flew along the Mississippi River and learned about the river geomorphology and values of the river. On August 11-12, 1999, the staff toured the river and learned about the habitats and development threats to the habitat, EMP, contaminant/nutrient issues, WRD, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs, joint USGS/FWS efforts on the river, monitoring, Comprehensive Conservation Plans, LTRM, and Habitat Needs Assessments. 8/10/99

**Congressional Staff Tour of Western Minnesota**  
*External Affairs*

John Revier, a member of Minnesota Senator Rod Grams' Washington office staff, and Dave Chura, from the Senator's District Office, received an overflight tour of Service facilities in western Minnesota August 11, 1999. The congressional staff learned about the wetland management districts, wetlands and wetland restoration, National Wildlife Refuges, the new Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, prairie restoration/harvesting/seed collecting, Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, Tribal cooperative projects, and the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. 8/11/99

### **Partner School Receives Scientific Literacy Grant**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Century School in rural southern Illinois received a \$45,000 Scientific Literacy grant August 11, 1999, that will enable the school's 326 students to assist Refuge staff with reforestation efforts in the Cache River Watershed. Historically, Century's administration and parent board have been opposed to the Refuge and restoration goals. This grant demonstrates a change in Century's position, shifting to one of support for the Refuge. Students will begin work on the refuge with an acorn round-up in October, followed by data collection, monitoring, and creating a Website. Partners include: Regional Office of Education, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pulaski/Alexander County Soil & Water Conservation District, Shawnee Community College. 8/11/99

### **Loosestrife Eating Beetles Released on Upper Mississippi River Refuge**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Six thousand purple loosestrife biological control beetles (*Galerucella spp.*) were released August 13, 1999, on the Lower Halfway Creek Area of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge-LaCrosse District. The beetles were supplied by Sherburne NWR where they were raised in captivity. The beetles are effective in controlling purple loosestrife density and vigor in other areas and

we are monitoring the release sites to detect any changes. There have been six other purple loosestrife beetle releases (*Galerucella spp.* and *Hylobius spp.*) on the District. So far, the monitoring has detected no change in the purple loosestrife populations in the release areas. The beetles must have adequate over-wintering habitat to survive and breed. It usually takes several years for the beetles to have an affect on the purple loosestrife in an area. Partners include: Upper Mississippi Refuge and Sherburne NWR. 8/13/99

### **With Service Help, Northern Illinois Mitigation Banks Achieve Success**

#### *Chicago Field Office*

A portion of two of the mitigation banks permitted in northeastern Illinois have achieved full certification by meeting all performance standards outlined in the Interagency Coordination Agreement on Mitigation Banking for the Chicago District. The Service's Chicago Field Office played an instrumental role in the establishment of the the Interagency Agreement, setting the performance standards, and in evaluating the performance of these banks. A significant portion of these two banks, among the first permitted in the country, have met all performance standards and expectations and are fully functioning wetlands. Thus, we have been successful in setting and enforcing a standard that achieves full restoration of wetland functions in the landscape. Partners include: U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers- Chicago District, Land and Water Resources, Inc., Wetlands Research Inc. 8/15/99

### **Controlling Carp Population Key to Waterfowl Use at Horicon NWR**

#### *LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office*

Staff at Horicon NWR conducted surveys of Refuge fishery and water levels in August to provide information on refuge carp populations and water volume. The information will be used to determine quantities of rotenone necessary to treat the marsh this winter and for evaluating the success of the project. Carp are the main reason vegetation will not establish on the marsh which reduces waterfowl use. Over 90 percent of the fish sampled at Horicon NWR this past summer were carp and the biomass was greater than 98 percent carp. These high carp numbers result in an absense of vegetation; significantly reducing waterfowl use. A carp treatment is scheduled this winter as part of an intergrated carp control plan that includes trapping, spot treatments, predator stocking, water level manipulation and screening. 8/15/99

### **Challenge Grant Project Restores Small Wetland in Eau Claire County**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

The Service partnered with Romain Anderson, a private landowner, to restore a drained two-acre wetland on

his property in Eau Claire County, Wis. The Challenge Grant project was completed by Bisek Construction of Eleva, Wis. The landowner paid \$1,300 and the FWS paid \$900. This was a challenge grant project which restored 2 acres of drained wetland in the Northwest Focus Area. 8/15/99

### **Smuggler of Mexican Bobcat Prosecuted**

#### *Chicago Law Enforcement*

On August 17, 1999, a Yorkville, Ill., resident paid a \$2,500.00 fine and forfeited a mounted bobcat to the Service. The bobcat had been illegally killed in Mexico, smuggled into the United States at Laredo, Texas, and transported to Yorkville, Ill. The hunter, who had a permit to hunt white tail deer, alleged that the Mexican outfitter told him he could also legally hunt bobcat on his white tail deer permit. The hunter also told Special Agent Joe Budzyn that he declared the bobcat upon import into the United States. Budzyn's investigation revealed the hunter did not have a Mexican permit to shoot bobcat, and that he did not declare the bobcat when he imported it. When presented with a copy of his signed wildlife declaration, the hunter stated, if it (bobcat) is not on the form it must mean I did not declare it". This investigation was predicated by information received from Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police Officer Hyatt who questioned the legality of the bobcat after noticing it in the records of an Algonquin Ill. taxidermist. The mounted bobcat will be

donated to a public scientific or educational institution for display. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Government of Mexico. 8/17/99

### **Minnesota Federal Aid Grant Field Review**

#### *Federal Aid*

Federal Aid employees Dick Tolbers, Niki DesRosier, and SCEP student Joy Hiromasa participated in a field review of nine State wildlife management areas/offices in the southern and west-central portions of Minnesota on August 17-19, 1999. Field reviews of federal aid sites allows those who are have federal grant responsibilities the opportunity to discuss with state grant administrators and project managers progress on the goals and objectives and to actually view the sites. Two sites were specifically recognized as success stories: Whitewater State Wildlife Management Area, and Farmland Wildlife Population Research Office. Whitewater WMA is a 28,000-acre State wildlife management area area being managed for not only wildlife but for sportfish. Some of the wildlife management activities observed included the restoration of grade stabilization ponds, a number of parking lots and informational signs, cooperative farming agreement tree/shrub plantings and wildlife food plots to name a few. The project is approximately 60 percent complete, it involves the restoration of about a 3-mile reach of the Main Branch of the Whitewater River in the vicinity of Dorer Pools 1, 2, and 3. This reach of the river is

only about two miles upstream of where the Whitewater outlets into the Weaver Bottoms" area of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife & Fish Refuge. A number of tree revetments and rock weirs have been placed in strategic locations within the river channel to help stabilize the riverbanks and control water flows. 8/17/99

### **Lake County Wetland Inventory Update**

#### *Chicago Field Office*

Since its initial publication in 1993, the Lake County Wetlands Inventory (LCWI) has come into widespread use, being the generally accepted wetlands inventory for local units of government, and state and federal agencies in their planning and regulatory efforts. While not a regulatory map, the LCWI is referenced in a number of local ordinances and is utilized as a tool in Section 404 Clean Water Act permit reviews by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Recognizing its widespread use and utility, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chicago Field Office has signed a memorandum of understanding with Lake County and our sister federal agencies to update the LCWI following standardized protocols. This will enable publication of a more current map product that will have greater credibility among the regulated public, and enable better wetland protection in Lake County. Partners include: Lake County Management Services, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District,

Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5. 8/18/99

### **Fish and Wildlife Service Employee in Ohio Teaches ESA to Forest Service Line Officers**

Reynoldsburg Field Office Buddy B. Fazio, endangered species biologist at the Service's Reynoldsburg Field Office, was presented with an appreciation award by the Lewis and Clark Law School of Oregon. Fazio served as Endangered Species Act instructor at two 1999 training sessions held for approximately 100 U.S. Forest Service Line officers from across the United States, especially the eastern U.S. Fazio and members of the Lewis and Clark Law School taught Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation, section 4 listing and recovery, and pre-listing (candidate) conservation. The course ensures that U.S. Forest Service decision makers are familiar with requirements of and processes under the Endangered Species Act. This means the needs of endangered species will be better addressed on national forest lands. Partners include: Lewis and Clark Law School of Oregon, U.S. Forest Service, Cincinnati Nature Center, Ohio Biological Survey (bats). 8/20/99

### **Rockford, Illinois Men Charged with Wildlife Violations**

*Des Moines Law Enforcement* Two Rockford, Ill., men have been charged in federal court with illegal hunting and other

firearms violations while on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. United States Attorney Stephan J. Rapp said that La Thammovang, 44, and Ping Phommatheth, 47, have each been charged with one count of killing protected migratory birds, one count of taking animals and one count of carrying and discharging firearms, all on a National Wildlife Refuge. The information alleges that on or about November 26, 1998 Thammovong killed five mallard ducks and one squirrel in a closed area of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Northeast Iowa.

Phommatheth allegedly killed five mallards and one wigeon. Both men were also charged with discharging firearms on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Trial is scheduled for November 2, 1999. The investigation was conducted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Law Enforcement Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Des Moines, Iowa. Partners include: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Bureau. 8/24/99

### **Refuge Boat Landing Upgraded to Include Handicap Accessible Fishing Area**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

The Upper Brice Prairie Landing on the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge was rehabilitated to provide a disabled accessible fishing area. The project included dredging 1,000 cubic

yards of sediment, placing 90 tons of riprap, paving a 25-foot x 100-foot area, installing wheelchair and car bumpers, removing trees, repairing the boat ramp and striping the ramp and parking lot. The project was completed in two phases.

The first phase involved mechanically dredging 1,000 cubic yards of sediment from an area directly upstream of the Brice Prairie Landing. This created a 60-foot x 100-foot area approximately six feet deep. Following the dredging, 90 tons of riprap were placed along the landing for 100 linear feet. The funding for Phase I was shared by La Crosse County, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin DNR, Brice Prairie Conservation Association and the Service.

Cost for dredging and riprap was \$8,663.

Phase II of the project involved upgrading the landing to make it accessible to persons with disabilities, and provide a designated fishing area that would provide access for shore anglers into the newly dredged area.

The Corps' landscape architect designed the fishing area. A paved surface was installed along a 25-foot x 100-foot area directly adjacent to the dredged area on June 16, 1999. Cost of the new surface was \$3,500.

To delineate the disabled accessible fishing area, parking bumpers were added to the front of the area (for wheelchair bumpers) and along the back edge to keep cars from entering the area on August



24. Cost for the bumpers including installation was \$864. The parking lot was then striped to define the disabled parking areas, parking and "no parking" areas. In preparation for striping, crews from LaCrosse County swept the parking area and the Town of Onalaska repaired existing holes in the landing and trimmed trees. Cost for striping the lot was \$685. Currently, benches to be placed within the designated fishing area are on order. Cost for three benches was \$924. Maintenance of the landing will be provided by the Town of Onalaska. Partners include: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge, La Crosse County, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Brice Prairie Conservation Association, Town of Onalaska. 8/25/99

#### **175 Visitors Learn About Service Programs and Hunting Techniques at Detroit Lakes Waterfowl Expo**

##### *Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District*

The Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District hosted the second annual Waterfowl Expo Aug. 28, 1999, at the District office near Detroit Lakes, Minn. Approximately 175 visitors participated in activities such as duck calling, shotgun patterning, waterfowl identification, retriever demonstrations, duck and goose decoy placement, range estimation, decoy carving, and face painting. Duck Stamps were on sale and drawings were held for door prizes. Antique decoys were also on display. Dennis Hunt, professional goose

hunter, author, and speaker, presented a seminar on goose hunting techniques. The Expo was made possible through the efforts of 25 volunteers who set up and staffed most of the information booths. Twenty local businesses donated door prizes to help make the Expo a success. Partners include: Twenty-five volunteers and Twenty local businesses. 8/28/99

#### **Necedah NWR Exhibits at Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors Festival**

##### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

The Necedah NWR set up and staffed an exhibit at the Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors Festival held at the Experimental Aircraft Association grounds in Oshkosh, Wis. August 27-29, 1999. The exhibit focused on past partnerships between the Necedah NWR and Ducks Unlimited. The Refuge also set up the Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck stamp Design contest artwork exhibit in the Art Village during the same event. The Friends of Necedah NWR donated a wood duck nest box which was awarded by random drawing. The Festival participation included 77,359 attendees, 1,020 volunteers, 80 sponsors, and 235 exhibitors. In addition to the outreach and promotion of the Service and Necedah NWR, 50 individuals requested to be added to the refuge activities mailing list. Based on this year's success, Duck Unlimited plans to conduct the event again in 2000. 8/29/99

#### **Surveys Locate New Populations of the Endangered Hine's Emerald Dragonfly**

##### *Chicago Field Office*

The Chicago Field Office funded a third year of surveys to locate populations of the Hine's emerald dragonfly. A new population was discovered this summer near Alpena, Mich. This is the first population to be found in Michigan's lower peninsula. An additional Wisconsin population was discovered this summer at Cedarburg bog, a state- and university-owned natural area just north of Milwaukee, Wis. Bill Smith, a member of the Hine's emerald dragonfly recovery team and Wisconsin DNR employee, was teaching a dragonfly workshop and identified one of the emerald dragonflies captured live by a student as a Hine's emerald. Hine's emeralds also turned up at a fen in Missouri during a Service-funded dragonfly survey by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). MDC biologist Linden Triall, primarily conducting a survey for the Ozark Clubtail, received a copy of the draft Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Recovery Plan and realized a specimen collected earlier this summer was the Hine's emerald dragonfly. Linden Triall will join the Hine's emerald dragonfly recovery team to lend her expertise on Missouri dragonfly habitat. Partners include: Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Missouri Department of Conservation, Wisconsin DNR and University of Wisconsin. 8/30/99

### **Over One Mile of Major Dike Rehabilitated at Horicon Refuge**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff, most notably the maintenance mechanic, at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge spent a considerable amount of time this summer in rehabilitating a badly deteriorated dike for the Main Pool, about 12,000 acres. Over one mile of the dike was rebuilt and strengthened with clay and rip rap. 8/30/99

### **Major Duck Nesting Habitat Improved at Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve**

*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Dry weather enabled Cypress Creek Refuge staff to complete needed improvements and renovate Bellrose Reserve moist soil units. The Reserve was in need of major levee repair; much of this work was the first since the moist soil units were built by Ducks Unlimited in 1989. In addition acres of willow were cleared to maintain open water for the large concentrations of waterfowl that use the area. Bellrose Reserve is managed as a resting, nesting, and feeding area for ducks; during the peak of the migration over 80,000 ducks use the area. The Reserve includes approximately 300 acres moist soil units. 8/31/99

### **East Lansing Field Office Staffer Bands Ducks in Canada**

*East Lansing Field Office*

Burr Fisher of the East Lansing Field Office completed a month-long duck banding detail

in Canada September 1, 1999. Fisher was part of a five-member crew that banded more than 8,800 ducks on four major areas within 40 miles of Wynyard, Saskatchewan. Twelve species of waterfowl were banded. Seventy percent of the ducks banded were blue-winged teal; mallards made up 24 percent of the total catch. Benning II swim-in traps were used baited with barley. Partners include: Canadian Wildlife Service, U.S. Migratory Bird Office. 9/1/99

### **Biological Control of Purple Loosestrife Encouraging at Horicon NWR**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

An estimated 48,000 *Galerucella* spp. beetles were reared and released this year at six sites on Horicon Marsh and Leopold Wetland Management District. In addition to a successful rearing season, two of the initial release sites showed significant damage to loosestrife this summer. These two release sites had beetles first released in 1996.

Use of the *Galerucella* beetles will allow for control of purple loosestrife. The beetle will not eliminate the plant, but will allow other desirable and native plants to compete. With two sites already seeing significant damage, it is expected that those sites will have native plants returning next year. Beetle rearing and releasing will continue and new release sites will be initiated next year. Partners include: Leopold Wetland Management District, Wisconsin DNR and Waupun High School. 9/1/99

### **Recovery Team Established for Endangered Illinois Cave Amphipod**

*Rock Island Field Office*

The Rock Island Ecological Services Field Office has initiated the recovery process for the Illinois cave amphipod, a newly listed endangered species. A recovery team was established in September 1999, and the Service has convened two meetings of the group. The team includes a good mix of academicians, state agency personnel and local stakeholders such as farmers. Several studies are in progress to delineate groundwater recharge areas, identify groundwater pollutants affecting the amphipod, monitor public use in caverns, and develop a non-lethal technique of identifying the species in its habitat. The team has begun preparation of a recovery plan and expects to have a draft plan completed by Fiscal Year 2000. Partners include: Illinois DNR, Monroe County Health Department, University of Illinois. 9/1/99

### **Wham Bam Doodle Hands-on Natural Resource Museum**

*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Elementary school students are learning about the Cache River Wetlands thanks to a featured display at the Wham Bam Doodle Hands-on Natural Resource Museum in Tamms, Ill. With assistance from Cypress Creek NWR staff, the museum features the Cache River Wetlands. Refuge staff assisted with the development of the exhibit and program for

students in Kindergarten through 6 grade. The exhibit employs all the senses and immerses students in a swamp environment. Two hundred and seventy-five students were introduced to the program on September 1, 1999. Egyptian School is a Partner School with Cypress Creek Refuge; exhibits will rotate every six weeks through the museum. Partners include: Egyptian School, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. 9/1/99

### **Illinois Graduate Students Study Neotropical Migratory Birds on Cypress Creek Refuge**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Under Dr. Scott Robinson's direction, University of Illinois graduate students have conducted research on neotropical migratory birds throughout the Refuge. Results of one component of this study includes tree species by foraging insectivorous birds. Twelve of the 13 species of birds in the study foraged selectively with respect to tree species. The Yellow-throated Warbler and Cerulean warbler were the most selective foragers. Yellow-throated vireo, red-eyed vireo and the eastern tufted titmouse were the least selective foragers. Three of the 19 tree species were strongly preferred by most of the bird community: kingnut hickory, bitternut hickory, and silver maple. The four most preferred trees were also relatively uncommon in estimated availability. The study recommends planting heavy-seeded and uncommon trees preferred by foraging birds to help provide

quality habitat for birds in restored habitat. Partners include: University of Illinois, Illinois Natural History Survey-Illinois DNR. 9/8/99

### **Service Presentations Part of Grazing Land Conservation Initiative Workshop**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Refuge Watershed Biologist Tex Hawkins gave field and classroom presentations on grassland bird monitoring to attendees of the Minnesota-Wisconsin-Iowa Grazing Land Conservation Initiative Workshop on Riparian Management September 8-9, 1999. The workshop, held at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center near Lanesboro, Minn., drew presenters and participants from as far away as Canada, Texas, Missouri, the Dakotas and Ohio. More localized training and publications are planned for the coming year. A video and monitoring "toolbox" can be obtained from the Land Stewardship Project at (651)653-0618. 9/8/99

### **Refuge Staff Begins GIS Natural Resource Mapping for Cypress Creek NWR**

#### *Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Refuge staff initiated a Geographical Information System (GIS) database for Cypress Creek NWR and the Cache River Watershed September 8, 1999. Digital orthophotography acquired from USGS was used for base mapping. GIS layers were compiled to produce an ownership map of the Refuge, a hydrology map of the Lower

Cache River, and a reforestation layer. With assistance from the Cache River Joint Venture Partnership, future products will consist of hydrologic mapping of the lower Cache River and GIS applications that address resource concerns and issues, restoration priorities, acquisition priorities, and management needs. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Southern 5 Planning Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 9/8/99

### **Radke Wetland Restoration**

#### *Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

The Radke Wetland restoration involved enhancement of a 775 acre wetland located on the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. The project consisted of adding elbows on pre-existing culverts running under the highway. Three water control structures were also added, each containing removeable stop logs. A 10,000 gallon-per-minute pump was placed within a new pumphouse. Refuge staff now has the capability to change the water levels by moving water into any of three different units. Partners include: Ducks Unlimited, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Citizen Natural Resources of Wisconsin, Wings Over Wisconsin, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Fond du Lac County Land and Conservation District. 9/10/99

**Student Trainee Performs Outreach to Texas A&M University, Kingsville**

*Illinois River NWFR*

SCEP Student Sonny Perez visited with TAMUK (Texas A&M University-Kingsville) student chapter of the Wildlife Society about the SCEP Program and careers with the Service during the annual meeting of the Wildlife Society in Austin, Texas. The TAMUK student chapter was named student chapter of the year by the Wildlife Society in 1998. More than 1,000 students were informed about the Service Student Career Enhancement Program and career opportunities. 9/10/99

**Illinois River Refuges Joins Resource Partners at Havana, Ill., Octoberfest**

*Illinois River NWFR*

Refuge staff shared its tent with the newly formed Emiquon Audobon Society, the Friends of the Illinois River, and the Long Term Resource Monitoring group at the Havana, Ill., Octoberfest Sept. 11-12, 1999. Guest speakers presented programs on raptors and butterfly gardens. Approximately 350 people visited the tent to learn about the refuge and other conservation efforts along the Illinois River. Partners include: Emiquon Audon Society, Friends of the Illinois River and Illinois Natural History Survey. 9/11/99

**Central American Conservation Personnel Trained Through Partnership for Biodiversity**

*External Affairs*

The Partnership for Biodiversity is an initiative aimed at promoting biodiversity conservation in developing countries worldwide through the joint efforts of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and the U.S. Peace Corps. As a representative for DOI, Jane West, Region 3 Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist, provided biological monitoring technical assistance to four globally significant protected areas of high biodiversity in Ecuador, South America. Jane presented a three-day workshop on biological monitoring in Spanish to 19 park guards representing protected areas, a one-day session for nine Ecuadorian technical experts, and a presentation for the U.S. Agency for International Development Office in Quito, Ecuador. The participants obtained hands on experience for monitoring landbirds, as well as an understanding of techniques for monitoring mammals, herptiles, vegetation, and fire. Partners include: U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy - Ecuador, Ministry of Environment - Ecuador (*Ministerio de Medio Ambiente*), Ecuadorian National Park Service (*Instituto Ecuatoriano Forestal y de Areas Naturales y*

*Vida Silvestre*), *Fundacion Antisana*, *Fundacion Natura*, *Fundacion Ecologica Rumicocha*. 9/13/99

**Refuge Partnerships Help Build Mathy Prairie Interpretive Deck**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Construction on a deck used for wildlife observation and interpretation at Mathy Prairie on the Upper Mississippi NW&FR - LaCrosse District was completed Sept. 13, 1999 by Boy Scout Travis Manteuffel as part of his Eagle Scout project. The deck was built on the the Refuge's recently-acquired Mathy Prairie, a 28-acre tract containing 11 acres of sand prairie located adjacent to the Great River State Bike Trail. The deck was built on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources bike trail right-of-way. The DNR provided the site, equipment and instruction to Travis on how to build the deck. Travis and his crew provided 301 hours of labor on the deck. Funds for materials and equipment were provided through the FWS Challenge Cost-Share Program. The DNR will provide the future maintenance on the deck. 9/13/99



### **Engineering Students and Waterfowl Association Help Improve Wetland Habitat**

#### *Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge*

A shallow-water impoundment on the east side of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge was recently renovated to a high quality wetland habitat with help from engineering students at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and members of the Crab Orchard Waterfowl Association. A leaking pond dam, constructed in the 1960s for waterfowl and watering cattle, was repaired, raised and lengthened. The surface area of the impoundment was doubled, increasing high quality wetland habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and other wildlife.

Engineering students, led by Roy R. Frank, assistant professor in the university's Department of Technology, created a contour map of the area, designed the re-constructed dam and spillway, and placed grade/fill stakes at the project site.

Refuge staff used equipment to clear brush and moved earth to repair, raise, and lengthen the original dam. Members of the Crab Orchard Waterfowl Association provided grass seed, fertilizer, straw mulch, tractors with implements, along with their time and labor to re-establish grass vegetation on the disturbed areas. The final product is an improved wetland habitat which will not only provide important feeding, loafing, and breeding habitat to migratory birds, but critical life components for a

variety of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species as well. Partners include: Senior Design Class, Department of Technology, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Crab Orchard Waterfowl Association. 9/14/99

### **North Crawford Students Dig-In to Help Plant Living Prairie Exhibit**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-McGregor District*  
North Crawford, Wis., school teacher Jean Ottaway was all smiles as she and her class of seventeen fourth graders arrived at the McGregor District office this fall. With gloves and trowels in hand they dug right in to help create a living prairie exhibit. By day's end the students, their chaperones and even the bus driver pitched in to help District staff plant over 1,300 prairie plants at the District office and visitor center. Ms. Ottaway, a Master Gardener with the Iowa State University Extension program, was originally asked to help plan the exhibit. Upon learning about the living prairie project, she gladly volunteered the services of her fourth grade class. Future travelers to the District Office/Visitor Center should enjoy their efforts for years to come. When asked what their favorite part of the day was, the students unanimous response was "getting dirty." Partners include: North Crawford (Wisconsin) Elementary School, Iowa State University Extension Service (Master Gardener Program). 9/15/99

### **NAWCA Grants Bring \$3.3 million to Region 3 Partners** *Refuges & Wildlife*

On September 15, 1999, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved four North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants to Region 3 partners, for a total of \$3,339,980.

The Cache River Wetlands III project will allow the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy to acquire a key parcel in the Cache River basin of southern Illinois, critical for a future re-connection of the Upper and Lower Cache Rivers.

The Missouri Four Rivers Wetland III project will allow the Missouri Department of Conservation to expand protected acreage in the floodplains of the Marmaton, Little Osage, Marais des Cygnes and Osage Rivers, which will be restored to bottomland forest and a diversity of other wetland habitats.

The Northcentral Iowa Wetland Project will allow the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and other partners to maximize the effectiveness of the Emergency Wetland Reserve Program in a five-county area.

Lastly, the Michigan Upper Peninsula Coastal Wetland project will benefit a multitude of partners by protecting and restoring coastal wetlands and associated uplands in the Lake Superior and St. Mary's River watersheds of Michigan.

Partners include: Iowa DNR; Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy; Ducks Unlimited; Missouri Department of Conservation; Natural Resource Conservation Service; Michi-

gan DNR; Anheuser-Busch, Inc; Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission; U.S. Forest Service; Worth County Conservation Board; Pheasants Forever; Keweenaw Bay Indian Community; Bay Mills Indian Community; Village of L'Anse, Mich. 9/15/99

### **LaCrosse FRO Studying Effect of River Channel Dredging on Fish**

#### *LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office*

Staff at LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) completed the monthly, and final sampling for Fiscal Year 1999 for a Dredge Placement Project on the Mississippi River's Pool 12. More than 15,000 fish were collected identified, weighed and measured during the year as part of the sampling. The project will help identify impacts to the fishery from dredging operations on a main channel site. LaCrosse FRO staff currently have one year of pre-dredging data analyzed and year two sampling is nearly complete. Year one results are similar to the previous year; indicating very little difference in abundance or diversity between control and dredge sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes placing dredge material on the site in October. After dredging is conducted we will monitor the fishery impacts for a minimum of two years. Partners include: Rock Island Army Corps of Engineers. 9/17/99

### **Stoddard Bay EMP Dedicated on Upper Mississippi River**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

A dedication ceremony was held on September 17, 1999, for the opening of the \$2.6 million Pool 8 Islands Phase II Habitat Restoration and Protection Project in Stoddard, Wis. The day included boat tours of the newly built Stoddard Bay Islands for approximately 100 people. The ceremony included remarks by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Deputy District Engineer, Capt John Weidner; Congressman Ron Kind; Executive Assistant to the Secretary of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Francis Fennessy; Malcolm Clark, a private citizen; Glen Green, J.F. Brennan Company; Region 3 Assistant Regional Director, John Blankenship; and Dean Peterson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The ceremony concluded with a ribbon cutting at the boat landing. A unexpected highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the Corps' Commanders Award to District Manager Jim Nissen for his continued work on Environmental Management Projects on the Upper Mississippi River. Mr. Nissen was presented with a plaque and medal by Capt. Weidner. Partners include: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, J.F. Brennan Company, Town of Stoddard, American Legion Post 315. 9/17/99

### **Illinois River Refuges Participates in Dickson Mounds Open House**

#### *Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge*

Student trainee Sonny Perez set up an Illinois River Refuges information table at the Dickson Mounds Museum's Open House Sept. 19, 1999. In addition to brochures and fact sheets, a computer was set to the Illinois River NW&FR web site. More than 300 people attended the open house and were exposed to information about Refuge and Service programs. 9/17/99

### **Ramsar Technical Meeting in Gland, Switzerland**

#### *Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Refuge Watershed Biologist Tex Hawkins represented North America at the Scientific and Technical Review Panel meeting of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Sept. 21-24, 1999 in Gland, Switzerland. To help meet the goal of achieving universal participation by all nations (currently 117) and doubling the number of registered wetlands (currently about 1,000) by 2008, Hawkins was assigned lead responsibility for compiling information and reporting at the 2003 World Ramsar Conference in Spain on wetland conservation incentives and management planning guidelines. A number of refuge wetlands in Region 3 would meet Ramsar Criteria, but Horicon and Cypress Creek

are the only two sites that we can presently claim. Seventeen globally important wetlands have been designated nationwide since the U.S. ratified the Treaty in 1986. 9/21/99

### **Illinois Hunters Pay Restitution to Wisconsin DNR Trumpeter Swan Recovery Program**

#### *Peoria Law Enforcement*

On Dec. 16, 1997, Charles R. Adkins and Paul G. Williams, both of Havana, Ill., shot three trumpeter swans while hunting waterfowl at the Anderson Lake Waterfowl Management Area in Fulton County, Ill. Two swans were killed, and a third was wounded but later captured. All three swans had a yellow neck collar and leg bands as well. The hunters turned in the two dead swans at the Illinois DNR check station, stating they thought the swans were hybrid geese. The Illinois DNR referred the case to the Service's Peoria Law Enforcement Office. The U.S. Attorney's and Probation Offices in Central Illinois initiated a pretrial diversion action for the hunters since both hunters were old and voluntarily checked both Trumpeter Swans into the check station. Each hunter paid \$1,875 to the Wisconsin DNR's Trumpeter Swan Recovery Program. The wounded Trumpeter Swan rehabilitated at the University of Minnesota Raptor Center and subsequently released to the wild. 9/21/99

### **Fox River EcoPartnership Watershed Plan Published Chicago Field Office**

Almost two years in the making, the Fox River EcoPartnership Watershed Plan, authored in part by Chicago Field Office staff, is available for public comment. The Fox River EcoPartnership has approximately 50 member organizations. Our vision for the Fox River watershed is to balance all the uses and demands on our natural resources while preserving and enhancing a healthy environment" — mission statement from the Fox River Watershed Plan. This comprehensive plan includes sections on recreation education land use water quality stormwater and habitat and will guide conservation activity and land use decisions in the watershed. This proactive effort has received positive attention from Illinois' Lt. Governor Corinne Wood. Partners include: Over 50 organizations including the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Friends of the Fox River, Fox Valley Park District, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Farm Bureaus, private citizens, and many more. 9/22/99

### **Necedah Area Recommended for Whooper Reintroduction Necedah National Wildlife Refuge**

On Sept. 24, 1999, the Whooping Crane Recovery team announced its decision to move forward with the release on endangered whooping cranes in Central Wisconsin.

Necedah NWR and the adjoining state managed federal properties known as the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area and the Sandhill Wildlife Area comprise the Central Wisconsin release area. Sandhill chicks will be raised in the summer of 2000 as a pilot program when additional suitability studies will take place to prepare for the 2001 release of the whoopers. In addition to Central Wisconsin, Horicon Marsh and Crex Meadows had been under consideration as possible release locations. Partners include: Wisconsin Dept of Natural Resources, International Crane Foundation, Whooping Crane Recovery Team, local businesses and organizations. 9/24/99

### **Necedah Participates in Cranberry Festival**

#### *Necedah National Wildlife Refuge*

On Sept. 24, 1999, Necedah NWR and the Friends of Necedah set up and staffed a booth at the 27th Annual Warrens Cranberry Festival. Over 100,000 people attended the weekend event. Activities included bog tours, craft vendors, educational exhibits and various contests. The refuge booth explained where the refuge is located and the various things that the refuge has to offer. Most attendees were not from the immediate vicinity. However, over 100 more individuals asked to be placed on a refuge mailing list. 9/24/99

**News Reporter Assists with Banding At Necedah NWR**  
Necedah National Wildlife Refuge

Jim Lee from the Wausau (Wis.) Daily Herald assisted refuge volunteers and professional staff with the refuge's waterfowl banding program Sept. 24, 1999. Jim participated in the hands-on activity while researching for an article for the newspaper. 9/24/99

**Volunteers make a Difference at Cypress Creek Refuge**

*Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge*

Cypress Creek Refuge held a picnic to recognize many individuals that volunteer at the Refuge. One hundred and eleven volunteers have helped Refuge staff with a variety of projects that include Stewardship Saturdays (volunteer work days), frog/toad surveys, hawk surveys, shorebird surveys, maintenance of public use sites, reforestation work, school programming and special events, waterquality monitoring, and the EcoWatch Monitoring Network. Special awards were given for the Volunteer of the Year and for those individuals that contributed many hours of service. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy. 9/25/99

**Wisconsin Approves Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for Karner Blue Butterfly**  
*Ecological Services*

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt joined Region 3 of the Fish and Wildlife Service at the Sandhill Wildlife Management Area in central Wisconsin Sept. 27, 1999, to announce approval of a Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan designed to protect the endangered Karner blue butterfly. The plan will help protect the butterfly while allowing land use and land management activities to continue. Regional Director Bill Hartwig issued an incidental take permit to the Department of Natural Resources and 25 private partners, authorizing implementation of the Plan throughout Wisconsin.

The Habitat Conservation Plan is the first of its kind in the nation. It includes a variety of activities such as forestry, right-of-way management, and habitat restoration that, when carried out, may incidentally take the endangered butterfly. The Karner blue butterfly is unique in its need to have disturbance to thrive. Long term survival of the populations on the landscape must include the very types of activities that involve some take of individual butterflies. The Plan has been developed to accomplish a goal of no net loss of available butterfly habitat over its 10-year implementation.

The Plan also involves an innovative strategy to include private landowners in Wisconsin through a voluntary conservation effort. An extensive

landowner contact program will be carried out by the DNR and HCP partners to demonstrate that the butterfly and land users can, indeed, co-exist in ways that benefit both. In addition to Secretary Babbitt and Regional Director Hartwig, the commemorating event featured endorsements by representatives of the Wisconsin DNR, forest industry, conservation organizations and private landowners. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt praised the effort as an example of the flexibility of the Endangered Species Act and the value of developing partnerships to create innovative approaches across a broad landscape.

Partners include: Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources, Alliant Energy-Wisconsin Power & Light Company; ANR Pipeline; Burnett County Forest; Clark County Forest; Consolidated Papers Inc; Eau Claire County Forest; Jackson County Forest; Johnson Timber Company; Juneau County Forest; Lakehead Pipeline; Monroe County Forest; Nekoosa Papers, Inc; Northern States Power Company; Northwestern Wisconsin Electric Company; Polk - Burnett Electric Cooperative; The Nature Conservancy; Thilmany Division - International Paper; Washburn County Forest; Wausau-Mosinee Paper Corporation; Wisconsin Gas Company; Wisconsin Public Service Corporation; Wisconsin River Power Company; Wisconsin Department Of Transportation; Wisconsin Departments Of Trade, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and Wood County Forest. 9/27/99



### **Outreach Promotes Cooperation in Lake Onalaska Voluntary Avoidance Area**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Staff from the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse District worked with several partners to increase public awareness of the Lake Onalaska Waterfowl Avoidance Area program. The voluntary program helps keep an area of Lake Onalaska free from boat traffic during the height of the fall migration. More than 1,500 brochures were printed and distributed to more than 50 hotels/motels and sporting goods shops in the LaCrosse, Wis., area. The brochures are also distributed to boat landings on Upper Mississippi River Pool 7. Additionally, 2,000 placemats were printed for use at Marges' Restaurant which overlooks the Avoidance Area. Monitoring in 1997 found over 90 percent of the boaters on Lake Onalaska complied with the Avoidance Area. The Avoidance Area has been in effect since 1986. Partners include: Lake Onalaska Rehabilitation and Protection District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin Extension, LaCrosse County, LaCrosse County Conservation Alliance and Marges' Restaurant. 9/27/99

### **Drawdown of Horicon National Wildlife Refuge's Main Pool**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

Horicon National Wildlife Refuge staff have been partnering with other agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and private groups and individuals on the newly formed Marsh Management Committee for the long term benefit of the marsh and surrounding area. As part of this effort, a drawdown of the 32,000 acre Horicon Marsh was initiated last year. Unfortunately, heavy rains from April through July prevented desired vegetation like bulrushes to grow. However, plans continue to draw down the marsh since the low water levels will aid the carp control project scheduled for this winter. The desired outcome is to improve habitat for waterfowl and other marsh wildlife. Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service LaCrosse Fisheries Office, Lake Sinissippi Association, numerous private individuals with an interest in the marsh. 9/28/99

### **Water Quality Monitoring Along the Lower Cache River Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge**

Data was collected as part of a ongoing water quality monitoring/stream survey that will provide information which will allow resource staff to measure the success of restoration projects throughout the watershed. Water quality data was collected monthly from 12

sample locations along the Cache River, Cypress Creek, Big Creek, and the diversion ditch. Results documents conditions typical of small perennial river located in a predominately agricultural watershed in the Southeast United States. In addition the benthic macroinvertebrates were sampled at six study sites during the spring and the fall. Data from this study over concurrent years will document changes in water quality and aquatic resources and may well become the yardstick by which future large scale restoration projects are measured. Partners include: The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Citizens Committee to Save the Cache. 9/28/99

### **LaCrosse FRO Continues to Monitor Fish Species of Concern**

*LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office*

Staff at LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) continued to monitor interjurisdictional fish species of Special Concern through Fiscal Year 1999. Sampling efforts collected adult paddlefish and lake sturgeon in the Wisconsin, Chippewa, Minnesota, and Mississippi Rivers. Larval samples were collected on the Chippewa River. Seventy-eight paddlefish were newly tagged and 30 were recaptured from previous tagging efforts, some as far back as 1993. Of the 64 lake sturgeon capture events, six were recaptures. One lake sturgeon originally tagged in Pool 5A of the Mississippi River in 1995 was recaptured

by hook and line two times in the same week in Pool 10. Paddlefish and lake sturgeon were the target species of the sampling efforts, but this year was the first time blue sucker were also collected. In April 1999, 20 blue suckers with free flowing eggs and milt were captured in the Wisconsin River near Prairie du Sac Wisconsin. The blue sucker is listed as a Threatened Species by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and is a federal species of Special Concern. Collection of spawning blue sucker in the sampling area further documents the importance of this habitat for numerous fish populations. The additional tag data collected on paddlefish has been added to the FRO's extensive paddlefish tag database and will enable thorough and continued assessment of this species' population status. The lake sturgeon tag database is in its infancy and will require additional efforts to enable assessment of lake sturgeon population status. LaCrosse FRO is gearing up to initiate a mark-recapture study on blue sucker for Fiscal Year 2000. Partners include: Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, USGS-BRD LaCrosse. 9/28/99

### **Army Corps of Engineers Explores Region 3's Accomplishment Reporting System** *External Affairs*

External Affairs staff demonstrated the capabilities of the Region's Accomplishment Reporting System (ARS) for the Army Corps of Engineers September 29. Susan Fournier, a public affairs specialist from the Corps' district office in

Cincinnati, Ohio, spent a full day learning about the reporting system's information gathering and dissemination capabilities, and how information gathered via regional accomplishments can be used by employees and leaders as a decision making tool. Fournier was introduced to ARS-based information products, such as "Inside Region 3" and the Region's annual report. The Corps learned about the Accomplishment Reporting System through the Midwest Natural Resources Group an organization of federal resource agencies based in the Midwest. Both the Corps and the Service's Region 3 are members of the group. The Corps of Engineers, like the Service, is challenged to gather timely information about its resource activities from geographically dispersed offices and disseminate it to key decision makers the media and the public. As such the Corps' is examining the ARS for possible use in its public affairs/outreach programs. Partners include: fostering an improved understanding and appreciation for resource accomplishments of federal agencies based in the Midwest. 9/29/99

### **Carterville FRO Manages National Paddlefish Database and Coded-Wire Tag Processing Center** *Carterville Fishery Resources Office*

The Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Research Association (MICRA) national paddlefish database and an associated coded-wire tag processing center are managed by the Carterville Fish-

ery Resources Office (FRO). During Fiscal Year 1999, the Center processed 5,370 coded-wire reference tags from wild captured fish and 104 reference tags for 52 stockings of 85,492 hatchery reared fish. Coded-wire tags recovered from 281 recaptured paddlefish were processed and linked to release data in the database. At the end of the fiscal year, the database contains individual records for 1.1 million stocked paddlefish, more than 9,000 wild tagged paddlefish and nearly 1,000 tag recoveries.

Long and short distance migrations between state management jurisdictions and between important paddlefish habitats have been documented. Individual data summaries were constructed and distributed to participating states.

MICRA is comprised of 28 member state natural resource agencies. Twenty-three states contributed to the MICRA paddlefish database.

The national study is designed to assess the population status of paddlefish, formulate estimates of harvest and exploitation, and to describe their movement and migration patterns throughout the Mississippi Basin.

The project will continue during Fiscal Year 2000. Partners include: Blind Pony NFH; Carbon Hill NFH; Centerton NFH; Garrison Dam NFH; Gavins Point NFH; Mammoth Spring NFH; Natchitoches NFH; Neosho NFH; Private John Allen NFH; Tishomingo NFH; Uvalde NFH; Alabama,

Arkansas and North Dakota Divisions of Game & Fish; Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin and West Virginia Departments of Natural Resources; Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks; Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries; Mississippi and Montana Departments of Wildlife, Fish, & Parks; Missouri Department of Conservation; Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; New York Department of Environmental Conservation; Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission; South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, & Parks; Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. 9/30/99

### **Surveyors Stalk Pollinators of Wisconsin's Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid**

*Chicago Field Office*

The Service funded two graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to conduct surveys to identify the Wisconsin pollinators of the threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid. The survey identified a new species of hawkmoth pollinator for Wisconsin. The final study report will provide information on the pollinators' life history and larval food plants. This information will help us fulfill our Section 7 responsibilities in consulting with the Forest Service on potential impacts of the gypsy moth control program on listed species, since the eastern prairie fringed orchid depends on hawkmoths for pollination. 9/30/99

### **Horicon Marsh Monitoring Study**

*Horicon National Wildlife Refuge*

In order to return the Horicon Marsh to a healthy ecosystem, it is necessary to obtain information on the quality of the water entering and leaving the marsh. This project involved the operation of three stage discharge stations which collected total and dissolved phosphorous and suspended sediments and analyzed the results. The nutrient loading measurements helped ascertain if the water quality problem is primarily from non-point or point sources and also determine the major contributors. The data has been collected for the past two years and is now being analyzed. Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, United States Geological Service, Dodge County Fish and Game, Lake Sinissippi Association. 9/30/99

### **Water Control Project Will Help Manage Water Levels on Upper Halfway Creek Marsh**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Construction on the 146-acre Upper Halfway Creek Marsh Project began Sept. 14, 1999. Ducks Unlimited Inc. engineers and staff designed the project and are overseeing contracting and construction management responsibilities. The project will use a dike system to create three pools, an inlet structure on Halfway Creek, and three internal water control structures. Water levels will be managed in each pool by way of

an inlet structure on Halfway Creek and three additional water control structures. The project is designed to reduce sediment deposition in Halfway Creek Marsh and Lake Onalaska while providing valuable wetland habitat for migratory and resident wildlife. Plans for the site were developed by Ducks Unlimited, Inc. Dike construction began on September 14, 1999. Estimated cost for the dike construction and water control structures in \$250,000. Partners include: Paudler family, Ducks Unlimited, and donors, Town of Onalaska, La Crosse County, University of Wisconsin Extension, Mississippi Regional Planning Commission, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Clean Water Action Plan, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Wings Over Wisconsin and individuals. 9/30/99

### **Levee Work Continues on Chautauqua NWR**

*Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge*

Refuge wetlands work this year consisted of completing work on the north, south and setback levees around the 2,000 acres of the south pool of Lake Chautauqua. Due to high water levels on the Illinois River, Refuge work could not be started until after levels returned to normal July 15, 1999. During the high water period wave action caused considerable damage to the levees. All levees were seeded with cool season grasses in late August to hopefully, prevent damage in the future. Al-

though, a lack of precipitation has slowed turf development considerable. 9/30/99

### **Volunteer Hours at Upper Mississippi Refuge at All-time High**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

A total of 265 volunteers contributed a record number of 4,325 hours to the La Crosse District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge during Fiscal Year 1999. The greatest number of hours were recorded in the "Provide Visitor Services" category with 1,913 followed by "Habitat Management" with 844 and "Surveys & Censuses" with 665. 9/30/99

### **Round Lake Landing on Upper Mississippi Refuge Refurbished**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Round Lake Landing on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge-LaCrosse District, was closed for repairs July 26. The landing was graded and new gravel applied. A disabled parking area was also defined and curbing installed. The old boat ramp was removed and a new one installed and an abutment was installed for a future disabled accessible transfer dock. All work was completed by Sept. 30, 1999. The work was performed by American Plumbing, Inc. of Winona, Minn. The total construction cost was about \$50,000. 9/30/99

### **Citizens Asked to Remove Loosestrife Around Upper Mississippi**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

An innovative program to have citizens voluntarily remove cultivated purple loosestrife from their gardens began in August of 1999. Through a grant with the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 100 replacement plants were purchased from Hillview Greenhouse. A media campaign was initiated to inform citizens about the removal campaign. Citizens who voluntarily contacted the Refuge to have loosestrife removed from their yards were given a gift certificate for a replacement plant. Refuge and Friends staff removed the plants from yards and presented the homeowner with the certificate. The program was a huge success with all 100 plants being placed in two weeks. Additional calls for continuing the program in 2000 were taken. Partners include: National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges and Hillview Greenhouse. 9/30/99

### **Hunters Access Waterfowl Counts on Upper Mississippi Refuge**

*Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge-LaCrosse*

Waterfowl hunters have become electronically savvy in their quest for current waterfowl counts. The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge has two ways for hunters to keep informed, a

Website and a toll-free number. The website for the Refuge went on line in the spring of 1996. The information on the site has expanded every year to include public use regulations, history of the refuge, fall waterfowl numbers, current news releases, brochures, volunteer information, maps of the refuge, districts and Pools, and much more. We have found the website to be an invaluable outreach tool because this valuable information can be accessed from anywhere in the world at any time. Visits to the site have increased every year. In 1996 there were just over 10,000 hits to the site and in fiscal year 1999 the total hits on all webpages totaled over 63,000. The toll-free number was established in September 1999.

### **Minnesota Valley's Junior Duck Stamp Traveling Exhibit Reaches 100,000**

*Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge*

The Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp traveling exhibit operated by Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge consists of 36 pieces of art representing the first, second, and third place winners for 1999 for students in grades K-12. The exhibit traveled to 10 different sites and was viewed by approximately 100,000 people. The exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair drew the largest crowd. The exhibit prompted many phone calls and served as outreach for Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which is the receiving and coordinating site for the Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Program. 9/30/99